

ENGLISH FILE



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DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS

BEST FOR UPSC | UP PCS EXAM

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DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Mauryan Administration:

1. The Arthashastra of Kautilya refers to a well-structured espionage system using both civil and religious disguises.
2. The Mauryan army was primarily composed of salaried soldiers recruited through clan-based affiliations.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) Only 1

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** *Arthashastra* indeed outlines an elaborate espionage system using spies disguised as ascetics, householders, merchants, etc. This shows the strategic depth of the Mauryan administrative machinery.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** While early armies may have had clan affiliations, the Mauryan army was a **professional standing army** with **regular salaries**, not recruited primarily through kinship ties. The *Indica* of Megasthenes supports this with its description of a well-maintained army paid in cash.

Q2. With reference to “Ecotones” in ecology, consider the following statements:

1. An ecotone always has a lower species richness than the adjoining ecosystems.
2. Edge species are species that thrive particularly in ecotonal zones.
3. Ecotones can be both natural (e.g., mangroves) and anthropogenic (e.g., agroforestry zones).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** Ecotones often exhibit the “**edge effect**”—leading to **greater species diversity**, not lower.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** Edge species are specifically adapted to transition zones and thrive due to the availability of resources from both ecosystems.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** Ecotones can be natural like estuaries and anthropogenic like buffer zones between cropland and forest.

Q3. With reference to the concept of “core inflation” in the Indian context, consider the following statements:

1. Core inflation excludes food and fuel components from the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
2. It reflects the long-term trend in the price level unaffected by seasonal volatility.
3. RBI officially targets core inflation under its monetary policy framework.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Core inflation removes **volatile items** like food and fuel to reflect stable trends.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** It is used to understand **persistent price movements** and underlying inflation pressures.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** RBI targets **headline CPI inflation** (not core inflation), as per the monetary policy agreement with the Government of India (target: $4\% \pm 2\%$).

Q4. With reference to the Speaker of Lok Sabha, consider the following statements:

1. The Speaker vacates office immediately upon the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.
2. The Speaker can be removed from office by a resolution passed by an absolute majority of the Lok Sabha.
3. While presiding over a joint sitting of Parliament, the Speaker has the casting vote in case of a tie.
4. The Speaker decides on the disqualification of members under the Anti-Defection Law.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 4 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The Speaker **continues** in office even after dissolution of Lok Sabha until a new Speaker is elected.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The Speaker can be removed by an **absolute majority** (more than 50% of the total membership) of the House.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** In a **joint sitting**, it is the **Presiding Officer (usually the Speaker)** who conducts the session, but **there is no casting vote** in case of a tie—the bill fails.

- **Statement 4 is correct.** The Speaker decides on disqualification under **Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law)**.

Q5. Assertion-Reason Type –

Assertion (A): China-type climate shows distinct wet summers and dry winters.

Reason (R): This climate is dominated by moist monsoon winds in summer and dry continental winds in winter.

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

Answer: (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.

Explanation:

- The **China-type climate (Warm Temperate Eastern Margin)**, found in eastern China, southern Japan, parts of SE USA and southeast Brazil, is marked by **hot, wet summers** and **cool, dry winters**.
- This pattern is due to **monsoon winds**: In summer, warm moist air from oceans brings **heavy rainfall**, while in winter, dry **continental winds** dominate, causing a **dry season**.
- Thus, **both A and R are true, and R correctly explains A.**

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS PART

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India's Hydrogen-powered Driving Power Car (DPC):

1. The Hydrogen-powered DPC is exclusively powered by Green Hydrogen produced from biomass gasification.
2. It is being tested by Indian Railways to achieve zero-emission mobility on narrow gauge sections.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The hydrogen used is typically **green hydrogen** produced via **electrolysis using renewable energy**, not biomass gasification, which would fall under **biohydrogen or grey hydrogen**.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** The Hydrogen-powered Driving Power Car is being tested on **broad gauge routes**, like the **Sonipat-Jind** section in Haryana, not narrow gauge. This marks a shift toward **decarbonizing high-density rail routes**.

Q2. Why was the black hole GRS 1915+105 recently in the news?

- (a) It was observed emitting gravitational waves for the first time from a microquasar.
- (b) It showed an unprecedented dimming event, confusing astrophysicists.
- (c) It has been identified as the closest black hole to Earth in the Milky Way.
- (d) NASA confirmed the presence of a habitable exoplanet orbiting it.

Answer: (b) It showed an unprecedented dimming event, confusing astrophysicists.

Explanation:

- **GRS 1915+105** is a well-known **stellar-mass black hole** and part of a **microquasar system**.
- It **unexpectedly dimmed in May 2023**, causing confusion because such a drastic drop in X-ray emission had never been seen before.
- Scientists suspect a **massive cloud of gas** may be obscuring the black hole.
- It provided valuable clues about **accretion processes and disc dynamics**.

Q3. With reference to Rajendra Chola I, consider the following statements:

1. He established direct Chola control over the Srivijaya Empire in Southeast Asia.
2. He shifted his capital from Thanjavur to Gangaikonda Cholapuram to commemorate his northward campaigns.
3. The Naval expedition under his reign was primarily directed towards checking Arab influence in the Bay of Bengal.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Rajendra Chola I conducted a successful **naval expedition against Srivijaya (modern Indonesia)** in 1025 CE, establishing maritime dominance.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** After his northern conquests up to the Ganga, he built **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** and made it the capital.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** His naval expedition was to **control trade routes** and dominate Southeast Asian maritime powers—not specifically to check **Arab influence**, which was more prevalent in the western Indian Ocean.

Q4. With reference to the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), consider the following statements:

1. The scheme is mandatory for all informal sector workers earning below the taxable income threshold.
2. The government co-contribution is available to all subscribers, irrespective of their income status.
3. Subscribers can opt for different pension slabs ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 per month after attaining 60 years of age.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The scheme is **voluntary**, not mandatory.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** Government co-contribution was available **only to non-taxpayers** and only for a **limited time** (for 5 years from 2015 for eligible subscribers).
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The scheme allows subscribers to choose from **monthly pension options of ₹1,000 to ₹5,000** after the age of 60, depending on the contribution.

Q5. With reference to the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY), consider the following statements:

1. The scheme is designed to incentivize the employment of women and SC/ST candidates in newly registered micro-enterprises.
2. It offers the central government's contribution to both employer and employee EPFO accounts for eligible employees.
3. It is applicable to establishments registered under the Companies Act, MSME Act, and also under Cooperative Societies Act.
4. The benefits are limited to establishments that employ less than 500 workers and are incorporated after April 1, 2024.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Explanation:

- **All statements are correct.**
 - The scheme targets **employment generation**, especially for **women and marginalized groups (SC/ST)**.
 - It provides for **12% employer and 12% employee EPF contributions** to be borne by the **Central Government** for new eligible employees.

- It applies to **Companies, MSMEs, and Cooperative societies** that are registered post-April 1, 2024.
- It focuses on establishments with **less than 500 employees**.

Q6. Arrange the following South Indian mountain ranges from **west to east**:

1. Anaimalai Hills
2. Palani Hills
3. Shevaroy Hills
4. Javadi Hills

Choose the correct sequence:

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

Answer: (a) 1-2-3-4

Explanation:

- **Anaimalai Hills** lie in Kerala-Tamil Nadu border and are **westernmost**.
 - **Palani Hills** are located **east of Anaimalai**, forming part of the Eastern Ghats linkage.
 - **Shevaroy Hills** (near Salem) lie **east of Palani**.
 - **Javadi Hills**, in Tiruvannamalai district, are **further east** of Shevaroy.
- Thus, the correct west-to-east sequence is: **Anaimalai → Palani → Shevaroy → Javadi**.

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SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DAILY PRACTICE

GS Paper 1 –

Q1. Examine the major challenges faced by India in the immediate post-independence period. How did the leadership address them to lay the foundation of a modern nation-state? (15M)

Answer:

India's independence in 1947 came with unprecedented challenges. The country had to navigate a multitude of issues that threatened its unity and viability as a modern state.

Major Challenges:

1. **Partition and Refugee Crisis:** The partition of India led to massive communal violence and the displacement of nearly 15 million people.

2. **Integration of Princely States:** Over 560 princely states had to be integrated into the Indian Union, many of which posed defiance.
3. **Lack of Economic Infrastructure:** Colonial exploitation had left India impoverished with poor industrial infrastructure.
4. **Linguistic and Ethnic Diversity:** Accommodating India's diverse linguistic and ethnic groups posed a threat to national unity.
5. **Constitutional Void:** India had no clear constitutional framework for governance and required a strong foundation for a republic.

Leadership Responses:

- **Sardar Patel** used diplomacy and force (e.g., Operation Polo in Hyderabad) to integrate princely states.
- **Constitutional Framing:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar led the Constituent Assembly to frame a modern, secular, democratic Constitution.
- **Economic Planning:** Nehru adopted a mixed economy model with 5-Year Plans and state-led industrialization through institutions like the Planning Commission.
- **Democracy and Federalism:** Universal adult franchise was adopted despite illiteracy, showcasing strong commitment to democratic ideals.
- **Linguistic Reorganization:** The States Reorganization Act, 1956, addressed regional aspirations while preserving unity.

Conclusion:

The success of post-independence India lay in its ability to convert crisis into opportunity through pragmatic leadership, constitutional vision, and institution-building. The early foundations continue to uphold India's democratic framework.

GS Paper 2 –

Q2. In light of recent developments, critically analyze the evolving India–Maldives relationship. What implications does this have for India's maritime security and strategic interests in the Indian Ocean Region? (15M)

Answer:

India and the Maldives have traditionally shared strong cultural, economic, and strategic ties. However, recent political shifts have tested this historically cordial relationship.

Recent Developments:

- The new government under President Mohamed Muizzu (2023) has adopted a “pro-China” stance and demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel stationed in the Maldives under a prior bilateral agreement.
- Anti-India rhetoric has increased domestically, marking a rise in “India Out” campaigns.
- Simultaneously, China has increased its economic and infrastructural presence, including port construction and loans.

Strategic Importance for India:

1. **Geopolitical Location:** The Maldives is critical to India's maritime domain awareness due to its location in the Eight Degree Channel and proximity to major sea lanes of communication (SLOCs).
2. **Maritime Security:** Indian Navy's operation in the Maldives, including humanitarian missions like Operation Cactus (1988), have been crucial in establishing India's maritime influence.
3. **Countering Chinese Influence:** China's "String of Pearls" strategy, involving dual-use infrastructure projects, threatens India's interests in the Indian Ocean.
4. **Soft Power and Developmental Aid:** India has built infrastructure, conducted medical evacuations, and provided budgetary support.

India's Response:

- **Diplomatic Balance:** India has avoided aggressive posturing, focusing instead on non-interference and development cooperation.
- **Diversifying Maritime Ties:** India is enhancing naval coordination with other IOR nations like Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka.

Conclusion:

While the Maldives remains a critical partner, India must recalibrate its strategy to blend strategic caution with regional cooperation, ensuring maritime supremacy while respecting sovereignty and sentiment.

GS Paper 3 -

Q3. The informal sector remains the backbone of India's economy, yet it is persistently marginalized in formal policy frameworks. Analyze the issues faced by this sector and suggest policy measures for its formalization. (15M)

Answer:

The **informal sector** accounts for around **90% of India's workforce** and nearly **45% of the GDP**, yet it continues to face systemic neglect.

Key Issues Faced by Informal Sector:

1. **Lack of Social Security:** Workers have limited access to pensions, health insurance, or unemployment benefits.
2. **Credit Exclusion:** Informal enterprises lack collateral and financial documentation to access formal credit.
3. **Regulatory Burden:** Fear of compliance costs deters small units from registering formally.
4. **Poor Working Conditions:** Low wages, absence of contracts, and unsafe environments are widespread.
5. **Technological Exclusion:** Limited digital literacy hampers integration with digital payments or e-commerce platforms.

COVID-19 Impact:

The 2020 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities of informal workers through job losses and reverse migration.

Policy Framework and Gaps:

- **E-Shram Portal:** It has started mapping informal workers but lacks universal coverage.
- **Street Vendors Act, 2014:** Though progressive, implementation remains patchy.
- **MUDRA Scheme:** Offers microfinance but often does not reach the most unorganized sectors.

Way Forward:

1. **Universal Social Security:** Extend EPFO, ESI benefits through simplified registration.
2. **Digital Literacy:** Skilling programs for digital and financial inclusion.
3. **Ease of Registration:** One-window online platform to register MSMEs with minimal paperwork.
4. **Credit Inclusion:** Encourage SHG–bank linkages and collateral-free lending.
5. **Data-Driven Policy:** Strengthen E-Shram data for targeted welfare delivery.

Conclusion:

India cannot aim for inclusive growth without mainstreaming the informal sector. A participatory policy model that balances protection with empowerment is the need of the hour.

GS Paper 4 –

Q4. You are a District Collector in a drought-prone district. A media report has surfaced alleging that government food grains meant for public distribution were diverted by your subordinates to private contractors. The public outrage is growing. What will be your course of action? Discuss the ethical dilemmas involved. (15M)

Answer:

As a District Collector, my ethical responsibility is to uphold public trust, ensure justice, and maintain rule of law.

Ethical Dilemmas:

1. **Conflict of Interest:** Subordinates are accused; impartial action may create internal resistance.
2. **Public Pressure vs. Fair Inquiry:** Balancing quick public appeasement with procedural fairness.
3. **Transparency vs. Institutional Reputation:** Revealing truth may harm the administration's image.

Course of Action:**1. Immediate Measures:**

- Suspend officials involved pending inquiry.
- Secure PDS records and supply chains to prevent further misuse.

2. Independent Inquiry:

- Constitute a Special Investigation Team or request a state vigilance probe.
- Ensure whistleblower protection for staff or citizens reporting irregularities.

3. Public Communication:

- Hold a press briefing to acknowledge the issue and outline action steps.
- Use local channels to restore public trust.

4. Systemic Reforms:

- Digitize PDS supply chains using GPS tracking and biometric authentication.
- Conduct third-party audits of foodgrain storage and distribution.

5. Moral Leadership:

- Lead by example in reinforcing zero tolerance for corruption.
- Offer support to affected families if diversion caused starvation.

Values Involved:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Empathy
- Transparency
- Rule of Law

Conclusion:

The situation demands ethical courage and decisive action. As a public servant, I must act impartially and transparently, thereby restoring both administrative accountability and public confidence.

Current Affairs -

Q5. The revival of the Sirawas sacred grove in Rajasthan offers a model for community-led ecological restoration. Discuss the significance of such initiatives in India's biodiversity conservation strategy. (15M)

Answer:

The **Sirawas Grove**, once a degraded patch of land in Rajasthan's Jalore district, has been revived through community efforts led by local Bishnoi leaders. It symbolizes the power of traditional knowledge and community stewardship in biodiversity conservation.

Significance of the Initiative:

1. **Community Participation:** Local people fenced off the grove, restricted grazing, and revived water sources.
2. **Sacred Groves as Ecological Niches:** Sacred groves conserve endemic and endangered flora and fauna.
3. **Water Harvesting and Microclimate:** Revival of johads (traditional water structures) improved soil moisture and biodiversity.
4. **Cultural-Ecological Synergy:** Bishnoi traditions of protecting trees and wildlife directly contributed to ecological gains.

Broader Implications for India:

- **Decentralized Governance:** Aligns with **Article 243G** and **PESA Act**, empowering local institutions.
- **Climate Resilience:** Community forest management enhances resilience against desertification and climate variability.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13 & 15):** Aligns with global targets on climate action and life on land.
- **Replicability:** The model is low-cost, based on indigenous knowledge, and adaptable across ecological zones.

Challenges:

- **Lack of policy recognition** for community-conserved areas.
- **Encroachment threats** from infrastructure or agriculture.
- **Sustaining youth interest** in traditional environmental roles.

Way Forward:

- Integrate sacred groves into **State Biodiversity Action Plans (SBAPs)**.
- Offer **incentives through CAMPA** funds and biodiversity boards.
- Document and disseminate successful models like Sirawas nationwide.

Conclusion:

Sirawas Grove is more than ecological revival; it represents **civic ecology in action**. India's conservation strategy must embrace such community-driven efforts to achieve inclusive and resilient environmental stewardship.

