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DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS

BEST FOR UPSC | UP PCS EXAM

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DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

Q1. With reference to the **Jagir system under the Mughals**, consider the following statements:

Statement–I:

The jagir assigned to a Mansabdar was transferable and non-hereditary in nature.

Statement–II:

The revenue rights of a jagirdar were absolute and included ownership over land and peasants.

Which of the following is correct?

- (a) Both Statement–I and Statement–II are correct and Statement–II is the correct explanation of Statement–I
- (b) Both Statement–I and Statement–II are correct but Statement–II is not the correct explanation of Statement–I
- (c) Statement–I is correct but Statement–II is incorrect
- (d) Statement–I is incorrect but Statement–II is correct

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Under the Mughal **jagir system**, jagirs were *revenue assignments* given in lieu of salary. They were **transferable and non-hereditary**, mainly to prevent the emergence of local power bases, making **Statement–I correct**. However, jagirdars did **not have ownership rights over land or peasants**; land remained the property of the state, and peasants retained occupancy rights. Jagirdars only collected revenue as agents of the state. Hence, **Statement–II is incorrect**.

Q2. Which one of the following best explains the term “**Ecological Debt**” in environmental economics?

- (a) Permanent financial liability imposed on developed countries for historical industrial emissions
- (b) Net depletion of natural capital caused by a country’s ecological footprint exceeding its biocapacity
- (c) Cost of restoring degraded ecosystems paid through international climate finance mechanisms
- (d) Inter-generational ethical obligation of sustainable resource usage

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Ecological Debt refers to the situation when a country’s **ecological footprint exceeds its biocapacity**, implying that it is using more natural resources and ecosystem services than its ecosystems can regenerate. It is a **core concept in Ecological Footprint Analysis and Earth Overshoot studies**. Option (a) is normative, (c) relates to financing mechanisms, and (d) is ethical but not the economic definition.

Q3. With reference to the **institutional and functional evolution of NITI Aayog**, consider the following statements:

1. NITI Aayog has the constitutional status similar to the Finance Commission under Article 280.
2. Unlike the Planning Commission, NITI Aayog does not have powers to allocate funds to States.
3. The Governing Council of NITI Aayog includes Chief Ministers of all States and Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories with Legislatures.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

1. **Incorrect** – NITI Aayog is a **non-constitutional, executive body** created by a Cabinet resolution in 2015, unlike the constitutionally mandated Finance Commission.
2. **Correct** – NITI Aayog is a *think tank without financial allocation powers*; fund devolution is done by the Finance Commission.
3. **Correct** – The Governing Council consists of **C.Ms of all States and L.Gs of UTs with legislatures**, ensuring cooperative federalism.
Hence, **two statements are correct → Option (b).**

Q4. With reference to the **Ordinance-Making Power of the President of India**, consider the following statements:

1. An ordinance can be issued only when both Houses of Parliament are not in session.
2. An ordinance has the same force and effect as an Act of Parliament.
3. An ordinance can be issued on matters beyond the legislative competence of Parliament.
4. Re-promulgation of ordinances without placing them before Parliament has been held unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

1. **Correct** – Ordinance can be issued only when *both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are not in session*.

2. **Correct** – Article 123 gives an ordinance the **same legal force as an Act of Parliament**.
 3. **Incorrect** – Ordinances **cannot be issued beyond Parliament's legislative competence**.
 4. **Correct** – In *D.C. Wadhwa v. State of Bihar* and later judgments, the **Supreme Court condemned repetitive re-promulgation as a fraud on the Constitution**.
- Thus, **three statements are correct** → **Option (c)**.

Q5. Assertion–Reason Type –

Assertion (A):

Cumulonimbus clouds are capable of producing both heavy rainfall and severe atmospheric disturbances like hailstorms and tornadoes.

Reason (R1):

They are formed due to strong vertical uplift of warm, moist air through convection.

Reason (R2):

They develop predominantly in stable atmospheric conditions with low lapse rates.

Which of the following is correct?

- (a) A is true, R1 is true, R2 is true and both R1 and R2 explain A
- (b) A is true, R1 is true, R2 is false
- (c) A is false, R1 is true, R2 is true
- (d) A is true, R1 is false, R2 is false

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

The **Assertion is true**: Cumulonimbus clouds are responsible for **thunderstorms, cloudbursts, hailstorms, lightning, and tornadoes**.

R1 is true: They form due to **intense convection and strong vertical uplift of warm, moist air**.

R2 is false: These clouds form under **unstable atmospheric conditions with high lapse rates**, not stable conditions.

Hence, the correct answer is **Option (b)**.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS PART

Q1. With reference to the recent proposal of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** to alter the **classification of India's Foreign Exchange Framework**, consider the following statements:

Statement–I:

India is likely to be reclassified under a more liberalized exchange rate regime due to its increased capital account openness and frequent market-based interventions by the RBI.

Statement–II:

Under the IMF classification, India is presently categorized as having a freely floating exchange rate system.

Which of the following is correct?

- (a) Both Statement–I and Statement–II are correct and Statement–II is the correct explanation of Statement–I
- (b) Both Statement–I and Statement–II are correct but Statement–II is not the correct explanation of Statement–I
- (c) Statement–I is correct but Statement–II is incorrect
- (d) Statement–I is incorrect but Statement–II is correct

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

IMF is considering revising India's classification based on **de facto exchange rate behavior**, not declared policy. India currently follows a **managed float**, not a freely floating system, making **Statement–II incorrect**.

India's **growing capital flows, market-determined rates and calibrated capital account liberalization** justify possible reclassification, making **Statement–I correct**.

Q2. INS Mahe, recently in news, is best described as:

- (a) A frontline stealth frigate under Project–17A
- (b) A new Indian Navy logistics support vessel for island territories
- (c) A **Naval Air Enclave under the administrative control of Andaman & Nicobar Command**
- (d) A missile testing range under Western Naval Command

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

INS Mahe is a **Naval Air Enclave (NAE)** at Lakshadweep, administratively under the **Andaman and Nicobar Command**, used mainly for **aviation support, surveillance and logistics**.

Q3. With reference to **LCA Tejas, Pusa DST-1, and DRR Dhan 100 Kamala**, consider the following statements:

1. LCA Tejas is classified as a 4.5 generation multi-role supersonic combat aircraft developed under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
2. Pusa DST-1 is a gene-edited rice variety developed for enhanced drought tolerance using CRISPR–Cas9 technology.
3. DRR Dhan 100 'Kamala' is India's first rice variety developed exclusively for saline coastal ecosystems.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

1. **Correct** – Tejas is a **4.5 generation light combat aircraft** developed by HAL under indigenous defence production.
 2. **Incorrect** – Pusa DST-1 is a **drought and salinity-tolerant basmati rice variety developed through conventional breeding**, not CRISPR.
 3. **Correct** – DRR Dhan 100 ‘Kamala’ is India’s **first high-yielding salinity-tolerant rice variety** for coastal regions.
- Hence, **two statements are correct.**

Q4. With reference to the **International Astronomical Union (IAU)** approving new names for **Martian landforms**, consider the following statements:

1. The IAU is the globally recognized authority for assigning official nomenclature to celestial bodies and their surface features.
2. Newly approved Martian landform names are often derived from Earth’s rivers, classical mythology, and ancient place names.
3. India’s Gaganyaan mission directly nominates planetary surface names through the IAU’s Working Group for Planetary System Nomenclature.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

1. **Correct** – The IAU is the **sole international authority** for naming planetary features.
 2. **Correct** – Martian features draw names from **Earth rivers (for valleys), classical mythology, and ancient towns.**
 3. **Incorrect** – Space missions **cannot directly nominate names**; proposals go through scientific working groups of IAU, independent of national missions.
- Thus, **two statements are correct.**

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding **India’s recent strategic and scientific developments**:

1. Reclassification by IMF may influence India's sovereign credit perception and external sector vulnerability assessment.
2. INS Mahe enhances India's maritime domain awareness in the Arabian Sea region.
3. DRR Dhan 100 Kamala addresses the twin challenges of soil salinity and declining rice productivity in coastal India.
4. IAU naming of extraterrestrial features is legally binding on all national space agencies under international space law.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

1. **Correct** – IMF classification affects **external sector risk perception**.
 2. **Incorrect** – INS Mahe is located at **Lakshadweep**, primarily for **aviation and logistics**, not direct Arabian Sea domain awareness.
 3. **Correct** – Kamala variety is designed to **combat salinity-induced yield losses**.
 4. **Correct** – IAU nomenclature is **universally accepted for scientific and legal referencing in space governance**.
- Hence, **three statements are correct**.

Q6. Sirpur Archaeological Site, recently highlighted for conservation and tourism development, is correctly located in:

- (a) Odisha – along the banks of the Baitarani River
- (b) Chhattisgarh – on the banks of the Mahanadi River
- (c) Madhya Pradesh – along the Narmada River
- (d) Maharashtra – on the banks of the Godavari River

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Sirpur is located in **Chhattisgarh on the banks of the Mahanadi River**. It is an important **Buddhist and Shaivite archaeological complex** dating back to the **5th–8th century CE**, linked with **Panduvanshi dynasty** and ancient Indo-Southeast Asian trade routes.

SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DAILY PRACTICE

GS - 1

Q1. “Rock-cut architecture represents a unique confluence of religious philosophy, artistic excellence and technological mastery in ancient India.” Discuss with special reference to Buddhist and Jain rock-cut architecture. (15 Marks, 250–300 words)

Sample Answer:

Rock-cut architecture is among the most remarkable achievements of ancient Indian craftsmanship, involving the **excavation of monolithic structures from living rock** rather than assembling buildings from carved stone. It reflects a synthesis of **spiritual purpose, aesthetic refinement and engineering ingenuity**, especially in the Buddhist and Jain traditions.

Buddhist Rock-cut Architecture:

Buddhist rock-cut architecture developed primarily between the **3rd century BCE and 7th century CE**, under Maurya, Shunga, Satavahana and Gupta patronage. The two dominant forms were:

- **Chaityas (prayer halls)** such as Karla and Bhaja, characterized by apsidal ends, ribbed roofs and stupas at the rear.
- **Viharas (monastic residences)** such as Ajanta and Nasik, consisting of pillared halls with individual cells for monks.

Ajanta caves illustrate the zenith of Buddhist rock-cut art with their **narrative frescoes depicting Jataka tales, Bodhisattvas and court scenes**, revealing socio-economic life along with spiritual ideals. The emphasis on **simplicity, symbolism and meditation** reflects Buddhist philosophical values.

Jain Rock-cut Architecture:

Jain rock-cut architecture flourished mainly between the **5th and 15th centuries CE**, with major centres at **Udayagiri–Khandagiri (Odisha), Ellora (Cave 32 – Indra Sabha) and Badami**. Jain caves exhibit:

- Severe austerity in ornamentation, reflecting **Jain ideals of asceticism and non-attachment**.
- Intricate detailing in later phases, such as the **Indra Sabha at Ellora**, which combines monolithic construction with ornamental elegance.
- Emphasis on **Tirthankara images, Yakshas and Yakshis**, and narrative reliefs depicting Jain legends.

Technological and Artistic Excellence:

Rock-cut builders used **advanced geological knowledge, chiselling techniques and precise proportional planning**. The straight lines, symmetry, drainage systems and acoustics demonstrate exceptional technical mastery. The Kailasa temple at Ellora, though not religiously Jain or Buddhist alone, exemplifies the peak of monolithic engineering.

Conclusion:

Rock-cut architecture stands as a testament to India’s **spiritual depth, artistic vision and technological sophistication**. Buddhist caves emphasize **compassion, meditation and social harmony**, while Jain caves express **austerity, discipline and moksha-oriented philosophy**. Together, they form a priceless heritage of universal value.

GS - 2

Q2. *India–Russia relations have withstood global geopolitical shocks, yet face new structural challenges in a changing world order. Examine. (15 Marks)*

Sample Answer:

India–Russia relations are rooted in **Cold War-era strategic trust**, defence cooperation and shared geopolitical interests. Despite the end of bipolarity and recent geopolitical disruptions such as the **Ukraine conflict**, the partnership has displayed remarkable continuity, though new challenges have emerged.

Historical and Strategic Foundations:

During the Cold War, the erstwhile USSR supported India on key issues such as **Kashmir, Bangladesh Liberation (1971), and industrialization**. The **Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation (1971)** institutionalized strategic trust. This legacy continues through the **Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership** signed in 2010.

Key Areas of Cooperation:

1. **Defence Cooperation:** Nearly **60–70% of India's legacy military equipment** is of Russian origin. Joint projects include **BrahMos missile, AK-203 rifles, INS Chakra nuclear submarine leasing**, and S-400 air defence system.
2. **Energy Security:** Russia is a key partner in **nuclear energy (Kudankulam), oil imports, LNG supplies and Arctic cooperation**.
3. **Multilateral Platforms:** Both cooperate in **BRICS, SCO, RIC (Russia-India-China)** and G20, supporting multipolarity.
4. **Economic Ties:** Bilateral trade has seen a sharp rise post-Ukraine crisis due to discounted Russian crude, though trade remains energy-heavy.

Emerging Challenges:

- **Ukraine War:** India's neutral stance has strained perceptions in the West while testing its balancing strategy.
- **Russia–China Proximity:** Growing Moscow–Beijing strategic alignment creates concerns for India.
- **Payment and Logistics Issues:** Sanctions, rupee–ruble settlement hurdles, and insurance barriers affect trade diversification.
- **Technology Deficit:** Russia's diminishing global technological edge limits future cooperation.

Future Outlook:

India continues a **strategic autonomy-based approach**, engaging Russia without undermining Western partnerships. The focus is shifting towards:

- Joint defence production under **Make in India**
- Diversification into **pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, semiconductors and digital technologies**
- Enhanced connectivity through **International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.

Conclusion:

India–Russia relations remain resilient due to **strategic trust, defence interdependence and geopolitical complementarities**. However, sustaining this partnership in a **fragmented global order** requires calibrated diplomacy, economic diversification and long-term technological collaboration.

GS - 3

Q3. *Critically evaluate the effectiveness of India's pollution control legislations in addressing contemporary environmental challenges.* (15 Marks)

Sample Answer:

India has enacted a comprehensive legal framework to combat pollution, primarily through the **Water Act, 1974; Air Act, 1981; and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**. These laws created institutional architecture such as **CPCB and SPCBs**, but their effectiveness remains constrained.

Major Pollution Control Laws:

1. **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974:** Seeks to prevent water contamination and maintain water quality.
2. **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981:** Targets air pollution sources and sets emission standards.
3. **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** An umbrella law empowering the Centre to regulate hazardous substances, industries, and environmental clearances.
4. **National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010:** Provides speedy environmental justice.

Achievements:

- Establishment of nationwide **monitoring infrastructure for air and water quality**.
- **Pollution standards for industries and vehicles** have been progressively tightened (BS-VI norms).
- Judicial activism through **NGT and Supreme Court** has forced compliance and policy innovation.
- Expansion of **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** mechanism.

Structural Weaknesses:

- **Weak enforcement capacity** of SPCBs due to manpower and financial shortages.
- **Penalties remain outdated and weak** compared to the profits from non-compliance.
- **Regulatory capture and political interference** dilute deterrence.
- **Fragmented institutional coordination** among ministries and agencies.
- EIA process is often criticized for **procedural dilution, post-facto clearances and weak public participation**.

Emerging Challenges:

- Climate change-driven pollution events (heat-induced smog, dust storms).
- New pollutants like **microplastics, pharmaceutical waste, and e-waste**.

- Cross-boundary air and water pollution.

Way Forward:

- Update penalty structures using **polluter-pays and environmental compensation principles**.
- Digital monitoring, satellite surveillance and AI-based compliance tracking.
- Greater decentralization with accountability of urban local bodies.
- Public participation and environmental awareness.

Conclusion:

India's pollution control legislations provide a **robust legal scaffold**, but suffer from **implementation deficits and regulatory dilution**. Strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring strict enforcement are key to achieving sustainable environmental governance.

GS - 4

Q4. *"Ethical leadership is not merely about rule-following but about moral courage in the face of power and pressure."* Discuss with suitable examples. (15 Marks)

Sample Answer:

Ethical leadership transcends compliance with formal rules and laws; it embodies **moral courage, integrity, accountability and empathy**, especially when leaders confront pressure from authority, public sentiment or institutional constraints.

Meaning of Ethical Leadership:

Ethical leadership involves:

- Decision-making guided by **values rather than convenience**
- Commitment to **public interest over personal or political gain**
- Willingness to **face adverse consequences while upholding moral principles**

Why Moral Courage Matters:

In governance, leaders frequently encounter dilemmas involving **conflicting interests, political pressure and bureaucratic inertia**. Rule-following alone is insufficient because:

- Rules may be **ambiguous, outdated or manipulated**
- Many ethical challenges exist in **grey zones of legality**
- Integrity is tested when **wrongdoing is institutionally normalized**

Illustrations:

- **Civil servants exposing corruption** despite threats demonstrate ethical courage (e.g., whistleblowers in illegal mining cases).
- **Judicial officers delivering impartial verdicts** against political pressure reflect moral autonomy.
- During disasters, administrators who **prioritize rescue over procedural delays** showcase compassionate ethical leadership.

- Mahatma Gandhi's leadership during the freedom struggle exemplified **truth-based leadership despite repression**.

Challenges to Ethical Leadership:

- Political interference and transfer threats
- Social conformity and peer pressure
- Career incentives linked to compliance rather than integrity
- Institutional cultures tolerating unethical practices

Role of Institutions:

While individual ethics is central, institutions must:

- Protect **whistleblowers**
- Reward integrity through **transparent performance evaluation**
- Foster ethical training through **codes of conduct and value-based education**

Conclusion:

Ethical leadership ultimately rests on the **inner moral compass of the leader**. In a democratic governance system, leaders who combine **moral courage with constitutional values** strengthen public trust and ensure that power is exercised as a responsibility rather than a privilege.

Current Affairs

Q5. *The Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) Programme reflects a shift from welfare-driven youth policy to innovation-driven governance. Examine its significance for India's startup ecosystem and employment generation. (15 Marks)*

Sample Answer:

The **Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) Programme** is an institutional innovation aimed at nurturing early-stage entrepreneurs by providing **financial support, mentorship and incubation access** during the ideation-to-market transition. It reflects India's broader shift towards **enterprise-led development and job creation**.

Key Features of the EIR Programme:

- Provides a **monthly sustenance grant** to aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Supports **idea validation, prototype development and business registration**.
- Implemented by **state governments, incubators, and higher educational institutions** in collaboration with Startup India.
- Focuses on **youth, women entrepreneurs, and technology-driven startups**.

Significance for Startup Ecosystem:

1. **Bridging the "Valley of Death":** Most startups fail at the ideation stage due to lack of funding and mentorship. EIR directly addresses this gap.

2. **Democratization of Entrepreneurship:** Enables students and first-generation entrepreneurs to innovate without financial insecurity.
3. **Strengthening Incubation Culture:** Integrates academia, government and industry.
4. **Regional Innovation Spread:** Encourages startups beyond metropolitan cities into Tier-2 and Tier-3 regions.

Contribution to Employment:

- Promotes **job creators rather than job seekers**.
- Supports MSME-linked innovation, boosting local employment.
- Encourages **self-employment among educated youth**, reducing structural unemployment.

Challenges:

- Limited private sector integration in some states
- Risk of **idea-stage dependency culture**
- Variations in quality of incubation and mentoring
- Need for robust outcome evaluation mechanisms

Way Forward:

- Performance-linked funding and graduation benchmarks
- Stronger venture capital and industry partnerships
- Integration with **Digital India, Skill India and Make in India**
- Creation of national EIR performance database

Conclusion:

The EIR Programme symbolizes a governance transition from **welfare dependency to innovation empowerment**. If effectively implemented with accountability and private sector synergy, it can become a cornerstone of India's **startup-led economic transformation**.