

UPSC MAINS 2018 GS PAPER 1

1. Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. (150 words, 10 marks)
2. Assess the importance of the accounts of the Chinese and Arab travellers in the reconstruction of the history of India. (150 words, 10 marks)
3. Throw light on the significance of the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi in the present times. (150 words, 10 marks)
4. Why is the Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) needed? How does it help in navigation? (150 words, 10 marks)
5. Why is India taking keen interest in resources of Arctic region? (150 words, 10 marks)
6. Define mantle plume and explain its role in plate tectonics. (150 words, 10 marks)
7. What are the consequences of spreading of 'Dead Zones' on marine ecosystem? (150 words, 10 marks)
8. "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment. (150 words, 10 marks)
9. 'Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing'. Explain by giving reasons. (150 words, 10 marks)
10. How the Indian concept of secularism different from the western model of secularism? Discuss. (150 words, 10 marks)
11. The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss. (250 words, 15 marks)
12. Discuss whether formation of new states in recent times is beneficial or not for the economy of India. (250 words, 15 marks)

13. Why indentured labour was taken by the British from India to other colonies? Have they been able to preserve their cultural identity over there? (250 words, 15 marks)
14. "The ideal solution of depleting groundwater resources in India is water harvesting system." How can it be made effective in urban areas? (250 words, 15 marks)
15. Defining blue revolution, explain the problems and strategies for pisciculture development in India. (250 words, 15 marks)
16. What is the significance of Industrial Corridors in India? Identifying industrial corridors, explain their main characteristics. (250 words, 15 marks)
17. Mention core strategies for the transformation of aspirational districts in India and explain the nature of convergence, collaboration, and competition for its success. (250 words, 15 marks)
18. 'Women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata.' Substantiate your view. (250 words, 15 marks)
19. 'Globalization is generally said to promote cultural homogenization but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian society.' Elucidate. (250 words, 15 marks)
20. 'Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation.' Argue by giving suitable illustrations. (250 words, 15 marks)

UPSC MAINS 2018 GS PAPER 2

1. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? 150 words (10)
2. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. 150 words (10)
3. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? 150 words (10)
4. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee. 150 words (10)
5. "The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play." Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. 150 words (10)
6. "Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation' to environment." Comment with relevant illustrations. 150 words (10)
7. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. 150 words (10)
8. E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain. 150 words (10)
9. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. 150 words (10)

10. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018. 150 words (10)
11. Whether the Supreme Court Judgment (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. 250 words (15)
12. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India. 250 words (15)
13. India and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based. 250 words (15)
14. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss. 250 words (15)
15. Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects? 250 words (15)
16. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case. 250 words (15)
17. How far do you agree with the view that the focus on the lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? 250 words (15)
18. The Citizens' Charter is an ideal instrument of organizational transparency and accountability, but it has its own limitations. Identify the limitations and suggest measures for greater effectiveness of the Citizens' Charter. 250 words (15)

19. What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India? 250 words (15)

20. In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? 250 words (15)

UPSC MAINS 2018 GS PAPER 3

1. "Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy is the sine qua non to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". Comment on the progress made in India in this regard. (150 Words, 10 Marks)
2. Comment on the important changes introduced in respect of the Long-term Capital Gains Tax (LCGT) and Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) in the Union Budget for 2018-2019. (150 Words, 10 Marks)
3. What do you mean by Minimum Support Price (MSP)? How will MSP rescue the farmers from the low income trap? (150 Words, 10 Marks)
4. Examine the role of supermarkets in supply chain management of fruits, vegetables, and food items. How do they eliminate number of intermediaries? (150 Words, 10 Marks)
5. Discuss the work of 'Bose-Einstein Statistics' done by Prof. Satyendra Nath Bose and show how it revolutionized the field of Physics. (150 Words, 10 Marks)
6. What are the impediments in disposing the huge quantities of discarded solid wastes which are continuously being generated? How do we remove safely the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? (150 Words, 10 Marks)
7. What is wetland? Explain the Ramsar concept of 'wise use' in the context of wetland conservation. Cite two examples of Ramsar sites from India. (150 Words, 10 Marks)
8. Sikkim is the first 'Organic State' in India. What are the ecological and economic benefits of Organic State? (150 Words, 10 Marks)
9. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is viewed as a cardinal subset of China's larger 'One Belt One Road' initiative. Give a brief description of CPEC and enumerate the reasons why India has distanced itself from the same. (150 Words, 10 Marks)

10. Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is showing a downward trend, but still affects many parts of the country. Briefly explain the Government of India's approach to counter the challenges posed by LWE. (150 Words, 10 Marks)

11. How are the principles followed by NITI Aayog different from those followed by the erstwhile planning commission in India?(250 Words, 15 Marks)

12. How would the recent phenomena of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade affect macroeconomic stability of India? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

13. Assess the role of National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in boosting the production, productivity, and income of horticulture farms. How far has it succeeded in increasing the income of farmers? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

14. How has the emphasis on certain crops brought about changes in cropping patterns in recent past? Elaborate the emphasis on millets production and consumption. (250 Words, 15 Marks)

15. Why is there so much activity in the field of biotechnology in our country? How has this activity benefitted the field of biopharma? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

16. With growing energy needs should India keep on expanding its nuclear energy programme? Discuss the facts and fears associated with nuclear energy. (250 Words, 15 Marks)

17. How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act,2002 helpful in conservation of flora and fauna? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

18. Describe various measures taken in India for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) before and after signing 'Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030)'. How is this framework different from 'Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005'? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

19. Data security has assumed significant importance in the digitized world due to rising cybercrimes. The Justice B. N. Srikrishna Committee Report addresses issues related to data

security. What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses of the Report relating to protection of personal data in cyber space? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

20. India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering, and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? (250 Words, 15 Marks)

UPSC MAINS 2018 GS PAPER 4

Section A

1. (a) State the three basic values, universal in nature, in the context of civil services and bring out their importance. (150 words) (10)

(b) Distinguish between "Code of ethics" and "Code of conduct" with suitable examples. (150 words) (10)

2. (a) What is meant by public interest? What are the principles and procedures to be followed by the civil servants in public interest? (150 words) (10)

(b) "The Right to Information Act is not all about citizens' empowerment alone, it essentially redefines the concept of accountability. Discuss. (150 words) (10)

3. (a) What is meant by conflict of interest? Illustrate with examples, the difference between the actual and potential conflicts of interest. (150 words) (10)

(b) "In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they do not have the first, the other two will kill you." – Warren Buffett
What do you understand by this statement in the present-day scenario? Explain. (150 words) (10)

4. (a) "In doing a good thing, everything is permitted which is not prohibited expressly or by clear implication". Examine the statement with suitable examples in the context of a public servant discharging his/her duties. (150 words) (10)

(b) With regard to morality of actions, one view is that means are of paramount importance and the other view is that the ends justify the means. Which view do you think is more appropriate? Justify your answer. (150 words) (10)

5. (a) Suppose the Government of India is thinking of constructing a dam in a mountain valley bound by forests and inhabited by ethnic communities. What rational policy should it resort to in dealing with unforeseen contingencies (150 words) (10)

(b) Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration. (150 words) (10)

6. What do each of the following quotations mean to you in the present context?

(a) "The true rule, in determining to embrace, or reject anything, is not whether it has any evil in it; but whether it has more evil than good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of governmental policy, is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our best judgment of the preponderance between them is continually demanded." -Abraham Lincoln.(150 words) (10)

(b) "Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding. " - Mahatma Gandhi (150 words) (10)

(c) "Falsehood takes the place of truth when it results in unblemished common good." - Tirukkural (150 words) (10)

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Section B

7. Rakesh is a responsible district level officer, who enjoys the trust of his higher officials. Knowing his honesty, the government entrusted him with the responsibility of identifying the beneficiaries under a healthcare scheme meant for senior citizens.

The criteria to be a beneficiary are the following:

- (a) 60 years of age or above.
- (b) Belonging to a reserved community.
- (c) Family income of less than Rs. 1 Lakh per annum.
- (d) Post-treatment prognosis is likely to be high to make a positive difference to the quality of life of the beneficiary.

One day, an old couple visited Rakesh's office with their application. They have been the residents of a village in his district since their birth. The old man is diagnosed with a rare condition that causes obstruction in the large intestine. As a consequence, he has severe abdominal pain frequently that prevents him from doing any physical labour. The couple have no children to support them. The expert surgeon whom they contacted is willing to do the surgery without charging any fee. However, the couple will have to bear the cost of incidental charges, such as medicines, hospitalization, etc., to the tune of rupees one lakh. The couple fulfills all the criteria except criterion 'b'. However, any financial aid would certainly make a significant difference in their quality of life.

How should Rakesh respond to the situation? (250 words) (20)

8. As a senior officer in the Ministry, you have access to important policy decisions and upcoming big announcements such as road construction projects before they are notified in the public domain. The Ministry is about to announce a mega road project for which the drawings are already in place. Sufficient care was taken by the planners to make use of the government land with the minimum land acquisition from private parties. Compensation rate for private parties was also finalized as per government rules. Care was also taken to

minimize deforestation. Once the project is announced, it is expected that there will be a huge spurt in real estate prices in and around that area.

Meanwhile, the Minister concerned insists that you realign the road in such a way that it comes closer to his 20 acres farmhouse. He also suggests that he would facilitate purchase of a big plot of land in your wife's name at the prevailing rate which is very nominal, in and around the proposed mega road project. He also tries to convince you by saying that there is no harm in it as he is buying the land legally. He even promises to supplement your savings in case you do not have sufficient funds to buy the land. However, by the act of realignment, a lot of agricultural land has to be acquired, thereby causing considerable financial burden on the government, and also displacement of the farmers. As if this is not enough, it will involve cutting down of a large number of trees, denuding the area of its green cover.

Faced with this situation, what will you do? Critically examine various conflicts of interest and explain what your responsibilities are as a public servant. (250 words) (20)

9. It is a State where prohibition is in force. You are recently appointed as the Superintendent of Police of a district notorious for illicit distillation of liquor. The illicit liquor leads to many deaths, reported and unreported, and causes a major problem for the district authorities.

The approach till now had been to view it as a law and order problem and tackle it accordingly. Raids, arrests, police cases, criminal trials – all these had only limited impact. The problem remains as serious as ever.

Your inspections show that the parts of the district where the distillation flourishes are economically, industrially, and educationally backward. Agriculture is badly affected by poor irrigation facilities. Frequent clashes among communities gave boost to illicit distillation. No major initiatives had taken place in the past either from the government's side or from social organizations to improve the lot of the people.

Which new approach will you adopt to bring the problem under control? (250 words) (20)

10. A big corporate house is engaged in manufacturing industrial chemicals on a large scale. It proposes to set up an additional unit. Many states rejected its proposal due to detrimental effect on the environment. But one state government acceded to the request and permitted the unit close to a city, brushing aside all opposition.

The unit was set up 10 years ago and was in full swing till recently. The pollution caused by the industrial effluents was affecting the land, water, and crops in the area. It was also causing serious health problems to human beings and animals. This gave rise to a series of agitations demanding the closure of the plant. In a recent agitation thousands of people took part, creating a law and order problem necessitating stern police action. Following the public outcry, the State government ordered the closure of the factory.

The closure of the factory resulted in the unemployment of not only those workers who were engaged in the factory but also those who were working in the ancillary units. It also very badly affected those industries which depended on the chemicals manufactured by it.

As a senior officer entrusted with the responsibility of handling this issue, how are you going to address it? (250 words) (20)

11. Dr X is a leading medical practitioner in a city. He has set up a charitable trust through which he plans to establish a super-speciality hospital in the city to cater to the medical needs of all sections of the society. Incidentally, that part of the State had been neglected over the years. The proposed hospital would be a boon for the region.

You are heading the tax investigation agency of that region. During an inspection of the doctor's clinic, your officers have found out some major irregularities. A few of them are substantial which had resulted in considerable withholding of tax that should be paid by him now. The doctor is cooperative. He undertakes to pay the tax immediately.

However, there are certain other deficiencies in his tax compliance which are purely technical in nature. If these technical defaults are pursued by the agency, considerable time and energy of the doctor will be diverted to issues which are not so serious, urgent or even helpful to the

tax collection process. Further, in all probability, it will hamper the prospects of the hospital coming up.

There are two options before you:

- 1) Taking a broader view, ensure substantial tax compliance and ignore defaults that are merely technical in nature.
- 2) Pursue the matter strictly and proceed on all fronts, whether substantial or merely technical.
- 3) As the head of the tax agency, which course of action will you opt for and why? (250 words)
(20)

12. Edward Snowden, a computer expert and former CIA systems administrator, released confidential Government documents to the press about the existence of Government surveillance programmes. According to many legal experts and the US Government, his actions violated the Espionage act of 1971, which identified the leak of State secrets as an act of treason. Yet, despite the fact that he broke the law, Snowden argued that he had a moral obligation to act. He gave a justification for his “whistle blowing” by stating that he had a duty “to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them.”

According to Snowden, the Government’s violation of privacy had to be exposed regardless of legality since more substantive issues of social action and public morality were involved here. Many agreed with Snowden. Few argued that he broke the law and compromised national security, for which he should be held accountable.

**Do you agree that Snowden’s actions were ethically justified even if legally prohibited? Why or why not? Make an argument by weighing the competing values in this case (250 words)
(20)**