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# **VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE**

## **DAILY MCQ'S**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

**DATE: 11/12/2025 (THURSDAY)**

- **Static mcq's**
- **Current Affairs mcq's**
- **Mains Practice Questions**



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## DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

**Q1. With reference to the military and geopolitical strategies of the Vijayanagara Empire during its rivalry with contemporary powers, consider the following statements:**

1. Vijayanagara's alliance with the Bahmani successor states often involved granting territorial concessions in the Raichur-Doab to secure access to horse-trade routes from West Asia.
2. Unlike the Gajapati rulers, the Vijayanagara kings consistently avoided intervention in Odisha–Andhra coastal politics to prevent disruption of their revenue-sharing arrangements with Portuguese traders.

**Which of the above statements are correct?**

- (a) Only 1  
(b) Only 2  
(c) None  
(d) Both

### Explanation

Statement	Status	Reason
1	<b>Incorrect</b>	Vijayanagara <b>never granted</b> territorial concessions in the Raichur Doab; it remained the core theatre of conflict. They secured horses via commercial agreements, not by conceding strategic territory.
2	<b>Incorrect</b>	Vijayanagara rulers, particularly <b>Krishnadevaraya</b> , <b>actively intervened</b> in Andhra–Odisha coastal politics and frequently clashed with the Gajapati rulers for control over the crucial maritime trade and port access.

**Q2. Which of the following best explains why “mesopredator release” is increasingly studied as a driver of biodiversity decline in fragmented landscapes?**

- (a) Reduction of mid-level predators allows apex predators to expand, causing trophic collapse.  
(b) Decline of apex predators allows mid-level predators to proliferate, intensifying predation pressure on smaller fauna.  
(c) Expansion of herbivore populations leads to starvation of mesopredators, forcing them to migrate into human landscapes.  
(d) Habitat fragmentation reduces the reproductive success of mesopredators, causing prey species to become invasive.

### Explanation

The concept of **Mesopredator Release** describes a cascade effect.



- When **apex predators** (like wolves, lions, or dingoes) decline or are removed from an ecosystem (often due to human activity or habitat fragmentation).
- Their removal relieves the top-down control on **mesopredators** (mid-level carnivores like foxes, raccoons, or feral cats).
- The mesopredators then **proliferate (increase in number)**, leading to intensified predation pressure on small mammals, reptiles, ground-nesting birds, and other vulnerable fauna, causing a decline in biodiversity.

**Q3. With reference to the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and its subsidy classification, consider the following statements:**

1. The Blue Box subsidies are exempt from reduction commitments only when they are directly linked to production-limiting conditions.
2. The Green Box includes both decoupled income support and input subsidies to resource-poor farmers if such subsidies do not distort trade or production.
3. The Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) includes all Amber Box subsidies as well as all product-specific Green Box subsidies.

**How many of the above statements are correct?**

- (a) One only
- (b) Two only
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Explanation**

Statement	Status	Reason
1	Correct	<b>Blue Box</b> subsidies are permitted (exempt from reduction) only if they are tied to programmes that <b>limit production</b> (e.g., set-aside requirements).
2	Correct	<b>Green Box</b> subsidies are considered non- or minimally trade-distorting. They include decoupled income support and support for resource-poor farmers, environmental programmes, and research, provided they meet the non-distortion criteria.
3	Incorrect	The <b>Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS)</b> calculates all <b>Amber Box</b> subsidies (minus the <i>de minimis</i> exceptions). <b>Green Box</b> subsidies are explicitly <b>excluded</b> from AMS calculations because they are non-trade-distorting.



**Q4. With reference to the constitutional safeguards under Article 22, consider the following statements:**

1. Article 22 applies to both punitive detention and preventive detention in identical procedural form.
2. Under preventive detention laws, the detainee has the right to be informed of the grounds of detention as soon as may be, but the right to legal representation is not constitutionally guaranteed.
3. No detention beyond three months is permissible unless approved by an Advisory Board, whose members must be qualified to be High Court judges.
4. The protection against arrest without being told the grounds extends even to enemy aliens detained under preventive detention laws.

**How many of the above statements are correct?**

- (a) One only
- (b) Two only
- (c) Three only
- (d) All four

**Explanation**

Statement	Status	Reason
1	<b>Incorrect</b>	Article 22 safeguards are divided: <b>Clauses (1) &amp; (2)</b> apply to punitive (punishment-based) detention, while <b>Clauses (4)-(7)</b> apply to preventive detention. The safeguards are <b>significantly different</b> .
2	<b>Correct</b>	Under preventive detention (Art 22(5)), the right to be informed of grounds exists, but the right to be defended by a legal practitioner (granted under Art 22(1)) is <b>withdrawn</b> (Art 22(3)).
3	<b>Correct</b>	Art 22(4) mandates that detention beyond <b>three months</b> requires approval from an <b>Advisory Board</b> , whose members must meet the qualifications of a High Court judge.
4	<b>Incorrect</b>	Article 22(3)(a) explicitly states that the protections under Art 22 <b>do not apply</b> to any <b>enemy alien</b> or to any person detained under any law providing for <b>preventive detention</b> .

**Q5. Assertion – Reason type -**

Assertion (A): In several regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, the pattern of river flow shows extreme seasonality despite the presence of large drainage basins.



Reason (R1): Much of the region lies on ancient pediplains with low gradients, causing sluggish drainage and high evapotranspiration losses.

Reason (R2): The Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) produces spatially unstable rainfall belts that shift drastically between seasons.

- (a) A is correct, and both R1 and R2 correctly explain A
- (b) A is correct, and only R2 correctly explains A
- (c) A is correct, but neither R1 nor R2 explains A
- (d) A is incorrect

### Explanation

- **Assertion (A) is True:** Major river basins like the Niger and Zambezi experience dramatic wet and dry seasons, leading to highly seasonal flow, which contrasts with their large size.
- **Reason (R1) is True and Explains A:** The region's characteristic **pediplains** (flat erosion surfaces) result in very **low river gradients**. This causes slow-moving water, high surface area exposure, leading to **high evapotranspiration losses** and a reduction of flow during the dry season.
- **Reason (R2) is True and Explains A:** The migration of the **ITCZ** (Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone) is the primary driver of climate seasonality in the tropics. Its shifting causes rainfall belts to move, resulting in **sharp seasonal variation** in precipitation, which directly translates to the extreme seasonality of river discharge.

**Conclusion:** Both geographical (R1) and climatological (R2) factors contribute to and explain the extreme seasonality of river flow in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS PART

**Q1. With reference to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), consider the following statements:**

1. It is an intergovernmental organization established by the United Nations General Assembly to supervise national electoral reforms in post-conflict states.
2. India is a founding member of International IDEA, and the Institute's funding primarily relies on voluntary contributions from its member states and the European Union.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) One 1
- (b) Two 2
- (c) None
- (d) Both

**Answer:** (b) One 2

Explanation:



| 1 | Incorrect | International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization, but it was not established by the UN General Assembly. It was established by 14 founding members at a conference in Stockholm in 1995 to promote democracy worldwide. Its work is non-prescriptive and provides comparative knowledge, not supervision for the UN. |

| 2 | Correct | India is listed among the founding members of International IDEA. As an IGO, its funding comes from its member states (including India) and other financial partners like the European Union. |

**Q2. Which of the following is the most accurate implication of the fundamental structure of a Masala Bond?**

- (a) It transfers the foreign exchange risk from the foreign investor to the Indian issuer, thereby increasing the issuer's exposure to rupee depreciation.
- (b) The currency of the bond is denominated in a basket of currencies, primarily the SDR, to stabilize its value against extreme market volatility.
- (c) It is a Rupee-denominated debt instrument that shifts the currency risk from the Indian issuer to the foreign investor, supporting the internationalisation of the Rupee.
- (d) Being governed exclusively by SEBI regulations, its funds are permitted for investment in domestic capital markets, making it a critical tool for short-term equity infusion.

**Answer:** (c) It is a Rupee-denominated debt instrument that shifts the currency risk from the **Indian issuer** to the **foreign investor**, supporting the internationalisation of the Rupee.

**Explanation:**

- **Masala Bonds** are Rupee-denominated bonds issued in offshore capital markets.
- The key feature is that the principal and interest are paid in Rupees. The foreign investor (buyer) converts their foreign currency into Rupees to purchase the bond and then converts the Rupees back into their foreign currency upon receiving repayment.
- Thus, if the Rupee depreciates against the investor's home currency, the loss is borne by the investor. This protects the Indian issuer from currency risk, which is the primary objective of the instrument, besides promoting the international use of the INR.
- (a) is the opposite of the truth. (b) is incorrect; they are denominated in INR. (d) is incorrect; they are governed by RBI (under the ECB framework) and SEBI, and their end-use is *restricted* from investment in domestic capital/equity markets.

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Sanchar Saathi initiative of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT):**

1. The 'Chakshu' facility within the platform allows a mobile subscriber to report suspected fraudulent communications received via call, SMS, or WhatsApp that potentially target financial fraud.
2. The platform is designed to track a lost/stolen mobile phone using its International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number only if the device's original SIM is still active.



3. The Sanchar Saathi initiative addresses concerns related to identity theft and the proliferation of connections based on forged Know Your Customer (KYC) details.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) One only
- (b) Two only
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Answer:** (b) Two only

Explanation:

| 1 | Correct | The 'Chakshu' feature is indeed a citizen-centric reporting tool for suspected fraud communication (impersonation, KYC scams, etc.) to prevent cybercrime and financial fraud. |

| 2 | Incorrect | The CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) system, integrated with Sanchar Saathi, allows a lost/stolen mobile device to be tracked/blocked using its IMEI number irrespective of the SIM card status or its activity, preventing misuse even if the SIM is changed or removed. |

| 3 | Correct | A core feature allows subscribers to check the number of mobile connections registered in their name and report any unauthorized connections, which is directly aimed at tackling forged KYC and identity-based fraud. |

**Q4. With reference to India's engagement with the UNESCO Executive Board, consider the following statements:**

- 1. The Executive Board is one of the three constitutional organs of UNESCO and consists of 58 member states elected by the General Conference for a four-year term.
- 2. India's recent re-election to the Board for the 2025–29 term gives it the right to veto decisions regarding the admission of new non-UN member states to UNESCO.
- 3. The Executive Board, and not the General Conference, is responsible for overseeing the execution of the programme adopted by UNESCO and examining the corresponding budget estimates.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) One only
- (b) Two only
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Answer:** (a) One only

Explanation:

| 1 | Correct | The Executive Board (along with the General Conference and the Secretariat) is a constitutional organ, has 58 members, and is elected by the General Conference for a four-year term. |



| 2 | Incorrect | Unlike the UNSC, the UNESCO Executive Board does not have veto power. It recommends the admission of new non-UN member states to the General Conference; the final decision is taken by the General Conference. |

| 3 | Incorrect | The Board examines the programme and budget estimates submitted by the Director-General and submits them to the General Conference with its recommendations. It is the General Conference that adopts the programme and budget. The Board is responsible for overseeing the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference. |

**Q5. Concerning the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and its associated challenges, consider the following statements:**

1. The BWC is the first multilateral disarmament treaty to ban an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), but it explicitly excludes the prohibition of the *use* of biological agents in warfare.
2. A key limitation of the BWC is the absence of a permanent, legally binding verification mechanism to conduct routine on-site inspections of State Parties' biological facilities.
3. The Convention requires State Parties to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific information for prophylactic and other peaceful biological purposes.
4. Only the United Nations Security Council, at the request of a State Party, can initiate an investigation into alleged breaches of the Convention.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) One only
- (b) Two only
- (c) Three only
- (d) All four

**Answer:** (c) Three only

Explanation:

| 1 | Incorrect | The BWC prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, and transfer of biological weapons. While its text does not explicitly ban use, it reaffirms and supplements the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which does prohibit the use of biological and toxin weapons. The States Parties have repeatedly affirmed that the BWC effectively prohibits use under all circumstances. |

| 2 | Correct | This is the primary weakness of the BWC. Efforts to establish a mandatory verification protocol (e.g., through an Ad Hoc Group) failed, leaving the Convention to rely on ad-hoc consultation and UN Security Council investigation (which can be vetoed). |

| 3 | Correct | Article X of the BWC mandates the sharing of scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, which is crucial for public health and disease prevention. |



| 4 | Correct | Article VI states that a State Party has the right to request the UN Security Council to investigate alleged breaches. Since the BWC lacks its own standing investigation body, the UNSC is the primary legally defined investigation authority. |

**Q6. Paraná Valles, which was recently in the news for its vast size and geological significance, is located on:**

- (a) The Tibetan Plateau in Asia, representing an ancient periglacial drainage network.
- (b) The southern highlands of Mars, indicating a past warmer and wetter climate.
- (c) The East African Rift Valley, associated with recent large-scale volcanic flood basalts.
- (d) The Amazon Craton in South America, formed by the massive Tertiary sediment deposition.

**Answer:** (b) The southern highlands of Mars, indicating a past warmer and wetter climate.

**Explanation:**

- **Paraná Valles** is a vast, ancient fluvial (river) drainage system located in the **Margaritifer Terra region of Mars's southern hemisphere**.
- Its dendritic (branching, tree-like) structure provides significant geological evidence that the planet once had surface-flowing liquid water, likely fed by rainfall, which is indicative of a **warmer and wetter climate billions of years ago**.
- The system is sometimes compared in scale to major terrestrial river basins, but its location is extraterrestrial.

## SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DAILY PRACTICE

UPSC Civil Services Mains Test Series

### 1. GS-I: Indian Society

**Q1. "Urbanization in India has often resulted in a juxtaposition of affluence and extreme poverty, creating socio-spatial fragmentation and 'islands of exclusion' rather than inclusive growth." Analyze this statement, highlighting the primary social and economic challenges posed by this pattern of urbanization. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Sample Answer**

The trajectory of Indian urbanization, characterized by rapid, often unplanned growth, presents a stark paradox: the co-existence of glittering commercial hubs and sprawling informal settlements. This process has not led to equitable development but rather to a **juxtaposition of affluence and extreme poverty**, resulting in significant **socio-spatial fragmentation** and the creation of **'islands of exclusion.'**

**Analysis of the Juxtaposition and Fragmentation:**

1. **Dualistic Economy:** Mega-cities host a globalized service economy (high-tech, finance) offering high salaries, while simultaneously housing a vast informal sector (domestic help, street vending, construction) trapped in subsistence wages. This economic dualism physically manifests in high-rise apartments overlooking slums (e.g., Dharavi in Mumbai).



- Gentrification and Displacement:** Land speculation drives up housing costs in central areas, leading to the eviction and forced migration of the urban poor to peri-urban peripheries, which lack basic services. This creates physically disconnected and socially isolated communities.
- Walled Communities:** The rise of gated communities and exclusive residential enclaves serves to physically segregate the affluent, restricting access to shared urban resources and public spaces, thereby reinforcing class and status boundaries.

**Social and Economic Challenges Posed by this Pattern:**

Category	Challenge	Impact
<b>Socio-Spatial</b>	<b>Segregation and Lack of Social Capital</b>	Physical isolation reduces interaction between different socio-economic groups, eroding trust and social cohesion necessary for collective political action and inclusive policymaking.
<b>Economic</b>	<b>Informality and Vulnerability</b>	The bulk of the urban poor work in the informal economy, lacking social security, stable income, and protection from regulatory changes. This prevents them from fully participating in the urban economic mainstream.
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Uneven Service Delivery</b>	Investment in infrastructure (water, sanitation, transport) disproportionately favours affluent neighbourhoods, leaving fragmented peripheral settlements underserved, creating massive public health disparities.
<b>Political</b>	<b>Exclusion from Urban Planning</b>	Slum dwellers are often viewed as 'encroachers' rather than citizens, leading to their exclusion from planning processes and denial of tenure security, hindering long-term investment in housing and human capital.

**Conclusion:**

For urbanization to be a true engine of inclusive growth, it must move beyond fragmented development. Policies must focus on providing affordable public housing near work centers, regularizing and upgrading informal settlements, and integrating peri-urban areas into core city governance structures. The Smart Cities Mission must be recast to prioritize the provision of basic minimum services and livelihood security for the poorest urban inhabitants, turning 'islands of exclusion' into integrated parts of the urban fabric.

**2. GS-II: Indian Constitution and Polity**

**Q2. The spirit of cooperative federalism in India is increasingly being tested by disputes over sharing of centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) funds and the exercise of administrative discretion by**



**Governors. Critically analyze the challenges and suggest pragmatic reforms to strengthen centre-state relations in these specific domains. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

### Sample Answer

Cooperative federalism, the foundation of India's political structure, requires the Union and State governments to cooperate in the larger public interest. However, its spirit is consistently being tested, particularly through disagreements over the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and the perceived overreach in the exercise of administrative discretion by the Governor.

#### Challenges Posed by CSS and Fund Sharing:

- Misalignment of Priorities:** CSS, while providing essential funding for national priorities (like health and education), often involve rigid guidelines that do not account for state-specific needs or local contexts, compelling states to spend on centrally defined schemes.
- Financial Burden on States:** The current sharing ratio (e.g., 60:40 or 75:25) places a significant financial burden on states, especially non-special category states. Delayed release of the central share, or retrospective changes in funding patterns, destabilizes state budgets and fiscal planning.
- Erosion of State Autonomy:** The extensive 'conditionality' attached to CSS funds, often monitored directly by Central Ministries, bypasses state legislative control and reduces the state governments to mere implementing agencies, eroding their constitutional autonomy.

#### Challenges Posed by the Governor's Discretion:

- Political Partisanship:** The Governor, appointed by the President (on the advice of the Union Cabinet), is frequently accused of acting as an agent of the central ruling party, especially in non-ruling party states.
- Abuse of Discretion:** Issues like delaying assent to bills passed by the state legislature, demanding sensitive information, or the arbitrary use of discretion in inviting the leader of the majority party for government formation have created deep political mistrust. This subverts the elected government's will and destabilizes the state's political executive.
- Constitutional Vacuum:** The Constitution does not clearly define or limit the Governor's 'discretionary powers,' making it susceptible to political manipulation.

#### Pragmatic Reforms to Strengthen Centre-State Relations:

Area	Suggested Reform	Rationale
CSS	<b>Rationalization and Flexibility</b>	Implement the <b>Sarkaria Commission</b> recommendations for greater flexibility. Restructure CSS into a few 'Core of the Core' schemes, transferring funds via the Finance Commission, allowing states greater <b>autonomy in design and implementation</b> based on local needs.



Area	Suggested Reform	Rationale
Fiscal Space	Increased Untied Funds	Implement the recommendations of the <b>15th Finance Commission</b> in letter and spirit. Increase the overall transfer of <b>untied</b> funds to states, giving them complete freedom to finance local priorities.
Governor's Role	Bipartisan Appointment	The appointment process for the Governor should involve the state's Chief Minister, as suggested by the <b>Punchhi Commission</b> , ensuring confidence and non-partisanship.
Legal Clarity	Time-Bound Decision Making	Supreme Court guidelines should establish a <b>reasonable time limit</b> for the Governor to grant assent, reserve a bill, or return it, thus preventing indefinite administrative paralysis.

**Conclusion:**

Strengthening cooperative federalism requires moving beyond the formal structure toward genuine mutual trust. A non-partisan Governor, transparent CSS funding, and greater fiscal autonomy for states are essential to transform the current confrontational dynamics into a truly collaborative mechanism, thereby ensuring India's effective governance and national integration.

**3. GS-III: Environment and Ecology (Current Affairs - Bioremediation)**

**Q3. Define bioremediation and differentiate between its major techniques. In the context of industrial waste and oil spills, critically evaluate the potential and the inherent constraints of using bioremediation as a sustainable strategy for environmental cleanup in India. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Sample Answer**

**Bioremediation** is a waste management technique that utilizes naturally occurring microorganisms (such as bacteria, fungi, and algae) or their enzymes to degrade, detoxify, or convert hazardous substances (pollutants) into less toxic or harmless compounds. It is a biological process aimed at restoring contaminated environments.

**Differentiation between Major Techniques:**

Technique	Description	Application Example
<b>In Situ Bioremediation</b>	Treatment conducted directly at the contaminated site without excavation. It is cost-effective but slower.	<b>Biostimulation</b> (adding nutrients/oxygen to stimulate indigenous microbes) or <b>Bioaugmentation</b> (introducing external, specialised microbes).



Technique	Description	Application Example
<b>Ex Situ Bioremediation</b>	Contaminated material (soil/sludge) is excavated and treated elsewhere, e.g., in bioreactors or landfarms.	<b>Composting</b> or <b>Bioreactors</b> (controlled environment for faster degradation).
<b>Phytoremediation</b>	Uses plants (trees, grasses) to absorb, concentrate, or stabilize pollutants from the soil and water.	Use of hyperaccumulator plants to remove heavy metals like lead and cadmium.

### Potential of Bioremediation in India:

- Cost-Effectiveness:** Compared to conventional methods like incineration or 'dig and dump,' bioremediation is significantly cheaper, making it viable for large-scale cleanup of legacy waste sites.
- Eco-Friendliness and Sustainability:** It is a 'green' technology that results in the complete destruction of pollutants (mineralization) rather than merely transferring them (e.g., from water to sludge), aligning with sustainable development goals.
- Treatment of Complex Wastes:** Techniques like bio-augmentation using genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or specialized consortia can target complex and recalcitrant industrial pollutants, such as PCBs, PAHs, and persistent dyes, common in India's industrial belt.
- Oil Spill Management:** The use of oil-zapping bacteria (as developed by TERI) offers a crucial indigenous solution for cleaning up coastal and marine oil spills, protecting vulnerable ecosystems like mangroves.

### Inherent Constraints in India:

- Presence of Heavy Metals:** Bioremediation is highly effective against organic pollutants but has limited efficacy against heavy metals (like Arsenic, Mercury, Chromium), which are pervasive in Indian industrial effluent and require techniques like Phytoremediation or stabilization.
- Environmental Variables:** The success of *In Situ* techniques depends heavily on environmental conditions (temperature, pH, moisture, and nutrient availability), which are highly seasonal and difficult to control across India's diverse climate zones.
- Scalability and Time:** Large-scale remediation projects often take years to show significant results, which can be politically and economically unviable for rapidly developing infrastructure projects.
- Regulatory Hurdles and Public Perception:** Issues concerning the release of genetically engineered microbes for bioremediation face regulatory bottlenecks and public scepticism, hindering research and large-scale deployment.



**Conclusion:**

Bioremediation holds immense promise for detoxifying India's heavily polluted land and water resources. However, to maximize its potential, the country needs to invest in indigenous microbial consortia research, develop hybrid techniques that combine biological and physical methods (e.g., bio-filters with chemical precipitation), and establish a streamlined regulatory framework that encourages the safe and effective deployment of this sustainable technology.

**4. GS-IV: Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude**

**Q4. A recent public audit report revealed that a significant portion of funds meant for a critical nutritional scheme was diverted due to collusion between certain mid-level officials and local contractors. The scheme's failure has led to a measurable increase in malnutrition among vulnerable children in your district. As the District Collector, you are aware that exposing the entire network would cause a significant, immediate political scandal, potentially leading to the premature termination of the scheme itself. What course of action would you take, and what ethical dilemmas does this situation present? (20 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Sample Answer**

This situation presents a severe ethical conflict between the immediate pragmatic outcome (saving the scheme) and the paramount ethical duty of upholding integrity, rule of law, and prioritizing the vulnerable.

**Ethical Dilemmas Presented:**

Dilemma	Description	Competing Values
<b>Utilitarianism vs. Deontology</b>	Should I prioritize the <i>consequence</i> of saving the scheme (greater good for many children later) or the <i>duty</i> to punish corruption now (upholding the rule of law)?	<b>Consequence (Welfare) vs. Duty (Integrity)</b>
<b>Public Trust vs. Political Expediency</b>	Exposing the scandal upholds public trust but risks political fallout that may terminate the scheme. Concealing it ensures continuity but compromises integrity and encourages future corruption.	<b>Transparency vs. Pragmatism</b>
<b>Short-term relief vs. Long-term systemic change</b>	If I quietly replace the funds and fire a few low-level culprits, the immediate crisis is averted. If I expose the network, I risk the scheme but establish a precedent against systemic corruption.	<b>Crisis Management vs. Systemic Reform</b>

**Course of Action as District Collector:**

My primary duty as a public servant, guided by the principles of **Integrity, Accountability, and Compassion** toward the vulnerable, demands a two-pronged, simultaneous approach:



**A. Immediate Action (Prioritizing the Children and Evidence):**

1. **Restoration of Services (Compassion):** Immediately utilize the district's contingency funds or seek a special interim allocation from the State Government to ensure the scheme's services (food supply) are resumed within 48 hours. The measurable increase in malnutrition mandates this as the topmost priority.
2. **Securing Evidence (Rule of Law):** Immediately seal all relevant files, financial records, and digital communication devices of the concerned mid-level officials and contractors. Transfer the key officials out of their posts to prevent further tampering and immediately appoint a trusted senior officer to oversee the scheme.

**B. Long-term Action (Upholding Integrity and Accountability):**

1. **Confidential Investigation:** Initiate a confidential, internal investigation led by a highly trusted and honest Deputy Collector to gather irrefutable proof of the collusion and fund diversion.
2. **Reporting and Transparency:** Once the evidence is concrete, I must submit a comprehensive report detailing the diversion and the colluding network to the Chief Secretary and the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). **I will not conceal the findings.** While the scandal is a risk, compromising the truth would be a catastrophic violation of the public trust and the oath of office. The report will include an explicit, data-driven plan to protect the scheme's continuity (e.g., funding through alternative channels) while the prosecution proceeds.
3. **Systemic Reforms:** Propose structural changes to the scheme's implementation mechanism (e.g., direct benefit transfer, third-party monitoring, mandatory digital audit trails) to plug the loopholes and prevent future malpractices, thus turning the scandal into an opportunity for long-term reform.

**Justification:**

Upholding **integrity** is non-negotiable. While the political fallout is a concern, concealing a major crime that directly harms children would make me an accomplice and perpetuate the cycle of corruption. My duty is to administer the scheme effectively, and that effectiveness is premised on honesty. A short-term political crisis is preferable to a long-term moral and administrative decay.

**5. GS 1:**

**Q5. Discuss the key factors that led to the flourishing of temple architecture under the Chola dynasty. Analyze the distinctive features of the Dravida style that reached its culmination in the 'Imperial' Chola temples like the Brihadishvara Temple at Thanjavur. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Sample Answer**

The Chola period (c. 850 CE to 1250 CE) marks the zenith of the Dravida style of temple architecture, transforming simple stone shrines into monumental 'Imperial' structures that served as centres of political, economic, and cultural life.

**Key Factors for the Flourishing of Chola Temple Architecture:**

1. **Imperial Patronage and Political Stability:** The Cholas, especially Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, established a vast and stable empire stretching across South India and parts of Southeast Asia. Their



immense wealth from successful overseas trade and military conquests (e.g., plunder from the Chalukyas) provided the fiscal backing necessary for monumental construction.

2. **Theocratic State Structure:** Temples were not merely religious centres but the **nucleus of the Chola administration** and economy. They functioned as landholders, employers, banks, schools, and treasuries, cementing the king's legitimacy and theocratic authority.
3. **Religious Synthesis and Bhakti:** The patronage of Shaivism and the proliferation of the Bhakti movement generated enormous public enthusiasm, which translated into massive popular support and resource contribution for the temple building.
4. **Technological and Artistic Advancement:** The Chola period fostered an exceptional school of master artisans (sculptors, architects, and bronze casters) who achieved mastery over stone and bronze casting, allowing for complex designs, detailed sculptures, and towering *Vimanas*.

### **Distinctive Features of the 'Imperial' Dravida Style (Culmination at Thanjavur):**

The Brihadishvara Temple (Rajarajeswaram) at Thanjavur, built by Rajaraja I, exemplifies the culmination of the Dravida style:

1. **Monumental *Vimana*:** The temple is defined by its massive, towering pyramidal *Vimana* (main shrine tower), which is disproportionately larger and taller than the *Gopurams* (gateways). The Thanjavur *Vimana* rises to approximately 66 meters, making it the tallest temple tower of its time, dominating the landscape.
2. **Massive *Nandi* and *Mandapas*:** Unlike earlier structures, the Chola temples featured large, elaborate *mandapas* (halls) and were accompanied by a colossal monolithic *Nandi* (the bull vehicle of Shiva) statue, facing the main shrine.
3. **Circumambulatory Path (*Pradakshina-patha*):** The structure includes a vast inner circumambulatory passage lined with mural paintings depicting mythological stories and historical events, integrating art and devotion.
4. **Inscriptions as Historical Records:** The *Vimana* and the walls are covered with voluminous inscriptions detailing the land endowments, gifts, temple administration, and military campaigns of the emperor, serving as invaluable historical documentation.
5. **Simplified *Gopurams*:** While subsequent dynasties (Vijayanagara, Nayakas) would emphasize towering *Gopurams* at the entrance, the Imperial Chola temples prioritized the height and grandeur of the central *Vimana*.
6. **Fusion of Granite and Bronze:** The temples utilized massive blocks of granite for the main structure, complemented by the world-renowned Chola bronzes (e.g., *Nataraja*) placed within the temple complex, showcasing artistic excellence.

### **Conclusion:**

The Imperial Chola temples are a testament to the seamless integration of political ambition, artistic genius, and religious fervour. They elevated the Dravida style to unprecedented heights of monumentality and complexity, establishing a unique architectural legacy that continues to define the religious and cultural landscape of South India.