DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the administration under the Gupta Empire:

1. The Guptas introduced the office of *Sandhivigrahika*, who was primarily responsible for maintaining revenue records and fiscal audits.

2. The Guptas' administrative system reflected a strong decentralization of authority, where local and regional officers exercised considerable autonomy in governance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- The *Sandhivigrahika* was not a revenue officer but a high-ranking minister in charge of peace and war, i.e., foreign affairs and treaties. Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.
- The Gupta administration, while having a monarchical structure, exhibited substantial decentralization — local bodies like *Vishayas* and *Gramas* handled administration and justice with significant autonomy. Thus, Statement 2 is correct.
- This feature marks the transition from a centralized Mauryan model to a more feudal one under the Guptas.

Q2. Which one of the following statements best describes a key feature of the *Environment (Protection) Act, 1986*?

(a) It empowers the Central Government to lay down standards for emissions and discharge of pollutants in the environment.
(b) It provides for the constitution of a statutory National Green Tribunal under its provisions.
(c) It makes the State Governments solely responsible for granting environmental clearances for all projects.
(d) It was enacted under Article 262 of the Constitution dealing with inter-State water disputes.

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

- The *Environment (Protection) Act, 1986* was enacted under Article 253 to give effect to the decisions of the Stockholm Conference (1972). It empowers the **Central Government** to set environmental quality standards, regulate industrial discharges, and take preventive measures against pollution.
- Option (b) is incorrect — the *National Green Tribunal* was created under the *NGT Act, 2010*, not under the EPA.
- Option (c) is wrong — clearances are largely under the purview of the Union Environment Ministry.
- Option (d) is unrelated — Article 262 pertains to water disputes, not environmental protection.

Q3. With reference to *Cash Management Bills (CMBs)*, consider the following statements:

1. They are issued by the Reserve Bank of India on behalf of the Central Government to meet temporary mismatches in cash flows.

2. The tenure of CMBs can extend up to 364 days, depending on fiscal needs.

3. CMBs are not part of the Government of India's market borrowing programme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Explanation:
CMBs are short-term instruments introduced in 2010 to help the government manage short-term liquidity mismatches.

- Statement 1 is correct — they are issued by RBI on behalf of the government for temporary cash flow needs.

- Statement 2 is incorrect — their maturity is **less than 91 days**, not up to 364 days.

- Statement 3 is correct — CMBs are not included in the normal market borrowing programme, as they are purely for cash management purposes.
  Thus, 1 and 3 only are correct.

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding *Article 32* of the Indian Constitution:

1. It empowers the Supreme Court to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights.

2. It can be suspended even during the operation of a National Emergency under Article 352.

3. The right to constitutional remedies under Article 32 can be invoked against both State action and private individuals.

4. Parliament cannot curtail the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 32 by any ordinary law.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 4 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct — Article 32 is the "heart and soul" of the Constitution (Dr. Ambedkar), empowering the Supreme Court to enforce fundamental rights.

- Statement 2 is incorrect — Article 32 can **only be suspended** when the right itself (e.g., Articles 19) is suspended under Article 359 during an emergency, not automatically.

- Statement 3 is incorrect — it is enforceable only against **State action**, not private acts, except in certain exceptional situations (e.g., Article 17).

- Statement 4 is correct — Parliament cannot abridge or take away the power of the Supreme Court under Article 32; it is itself a Fundamental Right.

Q5. Assertion – Reason type -

Assertion (A): The sequence of the following hills from North to South is correct — Aravalli Hills → Vindhya Range → Satpura Range → Ajanta Hills → Nallamala Hills.

Reason (R): These hill ranges follow the general alignment of the Peninsular Plateau's slope from northwest to southeast.

(a) Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A.
(b) Both A and R are correct, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
(c) A is correct, but R is incorrect.
(d) A is incorrect, but R is correct.

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

- The correct north-to-south order is: **Aravalli Hills → Vindhya Range → Satpura Range → Nallamala Hills → Ajanta Hills.** Hence, Assertion (A) is incorrect.
- However, the Reason (R) is correct — most Peninsular hill systems follow a **northwest to southeast alignment**, reflecting the general slope of the plateau toward the eastern coast.
  Therefore, A is incorrect but R is correct.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS) recently reported in Indian defence news:

1. The MCPS tested by an Indian laboratory is specifically certified for high-altitude airdrops up to **32,000 ft**, and its certification was granted following unmanned payload tests only.

2. The MCPS is primarily intended to replace all legacy static-line paratroop systems in immediate frontline use and to permit HALO/HAHO operations without additional equipment modifications.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect. The MCPS underwent both manned and unmanned high-altitude trials; certification was not based solely on payload testing.
- Statement 2 is also incorrect. MCPS enhances airborne capability and indigenous development but is not an immediate replacement for all legacy static-line systems. HALO/HAHO operations still require additional life-support and mission-specific gear. Hence, neither statement is correct.

Q2. Which one of the following best describes the current scientific concern associated with the South Atlantic Anomaly (SAA)?

(a) It is a permanent reversal of Earth's magnetic poles localized over the South Atlantic and will make navigation impossible in that region.
(b) It is a growing region of weakened geomagnetic field strength over the South Atlantic that increases radiation exposure for satellites and spacecraft traversing it.
(c) It is a temporary ionospheric disturbance caused by solar storms which disappears within days.
(d) It is a tectonic feature beneath the South Atlantic leading to increased seismicity and volcanic eruptions.

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- The South Atlantic Anomaly is a weak zone in the Earth's magnetic field where radiation exposure is greater.
- It causes disruptions in satellite operations and onboard electronic systems.
- It is not a tectonic, permanent reversal, or short-lived ionospheric event.

Q3. With reference to the State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) launched by the Government of India, consider the following statements:

1. SMRI evaluates States primarily on their readiness to promote reforms and sustainable mining of **non-coal** minerals, including auctions and exploration.

2. The SMRI was introduced as part of the Union Budget 2025–26 and its first rankings placed Goa, Uttar Pradesh and Assam in the top 'A' category.

3. One of the explicit aims of SMRI is to incentivize adoption of technology (e.g., satellite monitoring) and transparency to curb illegal mining and improve revenue realisation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct as SMRI assesses non-coal mineral management, auctions, exploration, and sustainability parameters.
- Statement 2 is incorrect — the top-performing States were mineral-rich ones like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan, not Goa or Uttar Pradesh.
- Statement 3 is correct — the Index promotes transparency, digital tracking, and use of technology to curb illegal mining and improve governance.

Q4. With reference to the State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) framework and its implications, consider the following statements:

1. SMRI divides States into categories based on mineral endowment and performance so that high mineral-endowment States must always be ranked above lesser-endowment States.

2. SMRI includes sustainability and environmental management as explicit assessment parameters alongside auction performance and exploration.

3. The index is intended to be used by the Centre to prioritise central assistance and reforms conditionality for state mining projects.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect — SMRI ranks States within endowment-based groups; ranking is performance-based, not fixed by resource availability.
- Statement 2 is correct — sustainability and environmental parameters form part of its assessment metrics.
- Statement 3 is incorrect — it is a benchmarking and incentive framework, not a formal tool for conditional central funding.

Q5. Consider the following statements about the Scheme for Innovation and Technology Association with Aadhaar (SITAA) launched by UIDAI:

1. SITAA is an initiative of UIDAI to promote indigenisation and co-development of advanced identity technologies and to onboard startups and industry partners for Aadhaar-related R&D.

2. The scheme allows private companies unrestricted access to Aadhaar biometric and demographic data for algorithm training once they join SITAA.

3. SITAA includes collaboration with partner organisations such as MeitY Startup Hub and industry bodies to accelerate technology adoption in the digital identity ecosystem.

4. SITAA is aimed at combating spoofing, deepfakes and fraudulent use of identity by supporting development of anti-spoofing and liveness detection technologies.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1, 3 and 4 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct — SITAA seeks to foster innovation and self-reliance in Aadhaar-related technologies.
- Statement 2 is incorrect — there is no unrestricted data access; strict privacy safeguards apply.
- Statement 3 is correct — SITAA partners with MeitY Startup Hub and industry for co-development.
- Statement 4 is correct — it supports anti-spoofing, liveness detection, and deepfake prevention technologies.

Q6. On the map of South America, the bulk of the Atacama Desert lies in which one of the following countries?

(a) Argentina
(b) Bolivia
(c) Chile
(d) Peru

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

- The Atacama Desert, the driest non-polar desert on Earth, lies mainly in **northern Chile**, extending slightly into southern Peru.
- It runs along the Pacific coast, between the Andes Mountains and the Coastal Range.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

GS Paper – 1:

Q1. *"The early decades of post-independence India were marked by the twin challenge of political integration and economic consolidation." Examine how India managed these challenges in the 1950s and 1960s and the lessons they hold for present-day federal governance.*

Answer:
Introduction:
When India became independent in 1947, it inherited a fragmented political landscape and a weak economic base. The new nation had to build institutions of unity and stability while ensuring inclusive development and economic sovereignty.

Body:
1. Political Integration:

- **Role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon:** Over 560 princely states were integrated using a mix of diplomacy, persuasion, and firmness.

- **Instruments of Accession:** Legal mechanisms allowed states to accede on Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications.

- **Reorganisation of States (1956):** Linguistic reorganisation through the States Reorganisation Act strengthened the federal structure, accommodating diversity within unity.

- **Integration of French and Portuguese enclaves:** Pondicherry (1954) and Goa (1961) symbolised completion of territorial unity.

2. Economic Consolidation:

- **Planned Development:** The Five-Year Plans (starting 1951) provided a framework for industrialisation, social welfare, and agriculture-led growth.

- **Land Reforms:** Abolition of Zamindari and tenancy reforms aimed to democratise land ownership.

- **Institution Building:** RBI, Planning Commission, FCI, LIC, and others built the backbone of a self-reliant economy.

3. Lessons for Today:

- Cooperative federalism and consensus-building remain central to addressing present issues like GST, resource-sharing, and regional disparities.

- Balanced decentralisation ensures that integration does not mean uniformity.

Conclusion:

India's success in political and economic consolidation during the formative decades demonstrated a blend of idealism and pragmatism. The experience highlights the enduring need for inclusive governance and strong institutions to manage diversity within a democratic federal framework.

GS Paper – 2:

Q2. *"The effectiveness of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India lies not merely in constitutional independence but in the responsiveness of the political system to its findings." Discuss.*

Answer:
Introduction:
Article 148 of the Constitution establishes the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) as an independent constitutional authority tasked with auditing the receipts and expenditure of the Union and the States.

Body:
1. Constitutional Mandate:

- CAG acts as the "guardian of the public purse."

- Independence ensured by fixed tenure, protection from arbitrary removal, and non-subordination to the executive.

- Reports are laid before Parliament and State Legislatures for scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

2. Limitations in Effectiveness:

- **Lack of Enforcement Power:** CAG can audit and recommend but cannot enforce accountability.

- **Political Selectivity:** Reports often get politicised — focus shifts from systemic reform to blame-game.

- **PAC Backlog:** Delays in discussions weaken follow-up action.

3. Strengthening the Institution:

- Institutional follow-up mechanisms such as **Audit Action Taken Reports** need to be time-bound.

- Greater use of technology and data analytics in performance audits can enhance impact.

- Public access to CAG findings through digital transparency portals can increase citizen oversight.

4. Broader Political Responsiveness:

- When CAG reports (e.g., 2G Spectrum, Coal Allocation) were debated seriously, they led to systemic reforms.

- However, selective political response undermines the credibility of financial accountability.

Conclusion:

The CAG's independence is a constitutional necessity, but its effectiveness depends on the vitality of parliamentary democracy and political will. A responsive system that treats audit findings as instruments of reform, not partisanship, is essential for ensuring fiscal transparency and good governance.

GS Paper – 3:

Q3. *"Artificial Intelligence offers transformative potential for governance and economy, but its unregulated use poses profound ethical, economic, and security challenges."* **Examine.**

Answer:

Introduction:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is redefining productivity, governance, and human interaction. From predictive analytics in agriculture to facial recognition in policing, India is integrating AI rapidly. However, this technological leap comes with governance and ethical dilemmas.

Body:

1. Transformative Potential:

- **Governance Efficiency:** AI-based platforms such as CoWIN, e-Kranti, and AI4Bharat improve service delivery.

- **Economic Growth:** AI can add up to USD 500 billion to India's GDP by 2030 (NASSCOM).

- **Disaster and Health Management:** Predictive models help in early detection of floods, epidemics, etc.

2. Major Challenges:

- **Ethical Concerns:** Bias in datasets can lead to discriminatory outcomes, especially in recruitment or law enforcement.

- **Data Privacy:** Absence of a robust Data Protection framework raises surveillance concerns.

- **Job Displacement:** Automation threatens low-skill employment, widening inequality.

- **Security Risks:** Autonomous systems may be exploited for cyber warfare and misinformation.

- **Regulatory Vacuum:** India lacks a dedicated AI regulation or ethical AI framework.

3. The Way Forward:

- **National AI Policy:** A balance between innovation and accountability.

- **Ethical AI Guidelines:** Based on fairness, transparency, and human oversight.

- **AI Literacy and Reskilling:** Prepare workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Promote indigenous AI innovation through "AI for All" initiative.

Conclusion:

AI is a double-edged sword — transformative yet risky. To ensure it empowers rather than endangers, India must craft a regulatory framework rooted in ethics, human rights, and inclusive innovation, positioning AI as a force for social good and equitable progress.

GS Paper – 4:

Q4. *"Ethical governance is not merely about adherence to rules but about the internalization of values."* *Elucidate with suitable examples.*

Answer:
Introduction:
Ethical governance refers to the process of decision-making guided by moral principles such as integrity, fairness, transparency, and compassion. While rules define boundaries, values define the spirit behind governance.

Body:
1. Ethics Beyond Rules:

- Rules can ensure compliance, but ethics ensure conviction.

- A rule-abiding official may avoid corruption but still lack empathy or service orientation — value-driven governance bridges this gap.

2. Importance of Internalised Values:

- **Integrity:** Ensures decisions are in public interest even without supervision.

- **Empathy:** Helps understand the impact of policies on citizens, especially vulnerable groups.

- **Accountability:** Flows from personal conscience, not fear of punishment.

3. Illustrations:

- **E. Sreedharan (Metro Man):** Displayed integrity and public service ethos beyond mere rule-following.

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri:** Resigned as Railway Minister taking moral responsibility — act of internalised ethics.

- **Modern Context:** A civil servant using discretion to provide relief during a disaster reflects value-based, humane governance.

4. Institutional Implications:

- Codes of Conduct and training must promote virtues, not just compliance.

- Ethical leadership inspires subordinates to act morally even in grey situations.

Conclusion:
Rules can control behaviour, but only values can transform it. Ethical governance thrives where civil servants act not out of fear of law, but out of duty to moral conscience and service to people.

GS Paper –

Q5. *"Project Trinetra marks a significant step towards predictive policing in India, but it raises critical issues of privacy, algorithmic bias, and accountability."* Discuss.

Answer:
Introduction:
Project Trinetra is an Artificial Intelligence-driven predictive policing initiative developed by the Uttar

Pradesh Police. It integrates data analytics, facial recognition, and criminal databases to identify crime patterns and potential threats proactively.

Body:

1. Significance and Innovation:

- **Predictive Policing:** Uses AI to analyse historical crime data and forecast vulnerable zones.

- **Real-time Surveillance:** Integrates CCTV networks, facial recognition, and license plate recognition.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Helps in efficient deployment of police personnel and faster case tracking.

2. Ethical and Operational Challenges:

- **Privacy Concerns:** Continuous data monitoring risks mass surveillance without citizens' consent.

- **Algorithmic Bias:** If input data reflect social or caste biases, outputs can perpetuate discrimination.

- **Accountability Gap:** Lack of transparency in AI decision-making makes it hard to assign responsibility for errors.

- **Legal Ambiguity:** India lacks a comprehensive legal framework governing facial recognition and AI-based policing.

3. Way Forward:

- **Ethical AI Framework:** Ensure explainability, transparency, and human oversight in predictive systems.

- **Data Protection Law:** Enforce strict safeguards under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

- **Training & Oversight:** Police officers must be trained to interpret AI outputs responsibly.

- **Public Audit:** Independent audits of AI tools to assess bias and accuracy.

Conclusion:

Project Trinetra symbolizes India's digital leap in internal security management. Yet, predictive policing must operate within democratic guardrails. Balancing technological efficiency with constitutional values of privacy, fairness, and accountability will determine its long-term legitimacy and success.