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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY
&
STUDY CENTRE

DAILY MCQ'S

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 14/04/2026 (TUESDAY)

- **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 administrative structure of the Gupta Empire, consider the following statements:

1. The *Kumaramatyas*, although often recruited from royal princes, were constitutionally barred from holding independent fiscal powers at the provincial level.
2. The *Sandhivigrahika*, despite being primarily responsible for treaty-making, occasionally exercised judicial functions, as indicated in certain copper-plate grants.

Which of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only 1
(b) Only 2
(c) None
(d) Both are correct

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1: Twisted. *Kumaramatyas* were high-ranking officials; many were royal relatives, but they **did exercise fiscal and administrative powers**, including revenue oversight. They were **not constitutionally barred** from fiscal authority. So the statement is **incorrect**.

Statement 2: Some Gupta inscriptions (esp. copper plates) indicate that the **Sandhivigrahika**, though primarily dealing with diplomacy/war treaties, also **performed quasi-judicial functions** in dispute resolution and land grants. Hence **correct**.

Therefore, **only one** is correct.

Q2. Which one of the following species is naturally found predominantly in peat-swamp forest ecosystems of Southeast Asia and requires a near-permanent waterlogged habitat for survival?

(a) Fishing Cat
(b) Bornean Orangutan
(c) Nilgiri Marten
(d) Himalayan Serow

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

The **Bornean Orangutan (Pongo pygmaeus)** heavily depends on **peat-swamp forests**, which are waterlogged, acidic, carbon-rich ecosystems. These apes use elevated peat domes and seasonally flooded zones for nesting and feeding.
Fishing Cat = marshes/mangroves in South Asia; Nilgiri Marten = Western Ghats evergreen forests; Himalayan Serow = steep Himalayan slopes, not peat swamps.

Q3. With reference to Additional Tier-1 (AT1) Bonds in India, consider the following statements:

1. These bonds can be permanently written down even when the bank continues to be a 'going concern', subject to RBI-specified trigger events.
2. AT1 bonds are mandatorily amortized in equal instalments beginning five years before maturity, similar to Tier-2 bonds.
3. Such bonds generally carry a call option, but banks are under no regulatory obligation to exercise the call even when the coupon resets to a higher rate.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 — Correct. AT1 instruments may be **permanently written down** if CET1 ratio breaches trigger thresholds or PONV is invoked, **even without liquidation**.

Statement 2 — Incorrect. AT1 bonds are **perpetual with no maturity**, therefore **no amortisation schedule**. Tier-2 has such provisions, not AT1.

Statement 3 — Correct. There may be a **call option**, usually at 5 years; however, **banks are not obliged** to exercise it, even if coupon resets to a higher spread.

Thus **two statements** are correct.

Q4. With reference to the roles and powers of District Magistrates (DM) and Judicial Magistrates (JM) in India, consider the following statements:

1. A District Magistrate may issue preventive detention orders under certain State laws, whereas a Judicial Magistrate cannot exercise such executive powers.
2. A Judicial Magistrate may order police investigation under CrPC, but a District Magistrate cannot do so under any circumstances.
3. A District Magistrate, while supervising law and order, can revise or suspend arms licences, whereas a Judicial Magistrate has no such statutory function.
4. A Judicial Magistrate can take cognizance of offences independently, while the District Magistrate cannot take cognizance of offences under the CrPC.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement 1 — Correct. DMs (executive magistrates) often have preventive detention powers under state-specific legislations. Judicial Magistrates do **not**.

Statement 2 — Incorrect (twisted). A DM **can** direct investigation (Sec. 156(3) via Executive Magistrate powers in certain contexts), though rarely invoked. So the absolute statement "cannot do so under any circumstances" is incorrect.

Statement 3 — Correct. DMs supervise arms licence administration under the Arms Act, including suspensions/revisions; JMs do **not**.

Statement 4 — Correct. JMs can take **cognizance** (Sec. 190 CrPC). DMs cannot. DMs are **not courts** under CrPC.

Thus, **three statements** are correct.

Q5. Assertion – Reason type -

Assertion (A):
The extensive use of *durable igneous stone* in major structures of the Hampi temple-complex suggests that Vijayanagara artisans had mastered techniques allowing large monolithic pillars to withstand lateral seismic pressure.

Reason (R1):
Many of the Hampi monuments show evidence of *mortise-and-tenon* joinery, which enhanced structural elasticity during ground vibrations.

Reason (R2):
The Royal Centre at Hampi was enclosed by a multi-layered defensive wall made primarily of sun-dried mud blocks to absorb seismic shocks.

Which one of the following is correct?

(a) A is correct, and both R1 and R2 are correct explanations of A.
(b) A is correct, R1 is correct but it is **not** the correct explanation of A; R2 is incorrect.
(c) A is incorrect, but R1 and R2 are correct.
(d) A is correct, but neither R1 nor R2 is correct.

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Assertion: True. Hampi's massive granite (igneous) structures and monolithic pillars demonstrate advanced stone-working and stability techniques.

R1: True. Mortise-and-tenon joints exist in many Vijayanagara structures and add stability, but they are **not the core explanation** for monolithic pillars resisting lateral pressure.

R2: False. Defensive walls at Hampi were largely **granite rubble-core walls**, not sun-dried mud blocks.

Thus: **A correct; R1 correct but not explaining A; R2 incorrect.**

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS PART

Q1. With reference to the proposed National Industrial Classification (NIC) 2025, consider the following statements:

1. The NIC 2025 introduces a separate 5-digit activity code cluster for "Digital Intermediation Services," classifying them distinctly from both Information & Communication and Financial Services.
2. Under NIC 2025, all climate-related economic activities are mandatorily tagged under a single cross-cutting "Green Taxonomy Division," irrespective of their parent industry classification.

Which of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only 1
(b) Only 2
(c) None
(d) Both are incorrect

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 — Correct.
Draft NIC 2025 proposes creating newer classification clusters for **digital platforms, intermediaries, AI-based services**, differentiating them from traditional IT and finance classifications. "Digital Intermediation Services" appears as a distinct cluster.

Statement 2 — Incorrect.
NIC 2025 integrates climate-related activities **within existing divisions**, not by creating a single "Green Taxonomy Division." Sustainability/green tags are **embedded across sectors**, not consolidated into one division.

Thus, **only 1** is correct.

Q2. Sentinel-6B, recently in news, is primarily designed to support which of the following global functions?

(a) Monitoring space-weather events near the magnetopause
(b) High-resolution ocean topography and sea-level measurements
(c) Ultra-low-orbit Earth resource mapping for mineral discovery
(d) Tracking greenhouse gas concentrations using mid-infrared spectroscopy

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Sentinel-6B (a continuation of Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich) under the **EU–US cooperation** is designed for **precise sea-level rise monitoring and ocean topography** via radar altimetry. It is not a methane/CO_2 satellite, nor a space-weather satellite.

Q3. With reference to the Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*), consider the following statements:

1. The Blackbuck shows strict female-philopatry, with adult females rarely leaving natal herds even during seasonal resource fluctuations.
2. In India, the Blackbuck is placed under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, but is classified as "Endangered" under the IUCN Red List.
3. Certain Blackbuck populations show a unique "continuous lekking system," where males defend non-resource territories solely for courtship display.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 — Incorrect (twisted).
Blackbuck females are **not strictly philopatric**; they shift between herds and feeding areas seasonally depending on forage/water.

Statement 2 — Incorrect.
Blackbuck = **Schedule I** species under Wildlife Protection Act, and **IUCN "Least Concern."**

Statement 3 — Correct.
Some populations (e.g., Velavadar) show **classical lekking** where males defend small display territories with no resources.

Only **one statement** is correct.

Q4. India's re-election to the Codex Executive Committee has implications for global food-standards governance. Consider the following statements:

1. India represents the "Asia Region" in the Codex Executive Committee, which consists of regional coordinators and officials elected on functional criteria rather than geographical quotas.
2. Codex standards, once endorsed by the Executive Committee, automatically become binding under WTO-SPS rules unless a member country explicitly opts out.
3. India's seat enables it to influence "horizontal committees" that frame cross-cutting guidelines such as contaminants, food additives and pesticide residues.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 — Correct.
India is the **Regional Coordinator for Asia** in the Codex Executive Committee, which has functional and regional representation combined.

Statement 2 — Incorrect (trick).
Codex standards are **voluntary**; WTO-SPS uses them as **benchmarks**, but they do **not** automatically become binding.

Statement 3 — Correct.
Regional coordinators influence discussions in **horizontal committees** (additives, residues, contaminants, hygiene).

Thus, **two statements** are correct.

Q5. With reference to the 'YUVA: AI for ALL' initiative recently launched in India, consider the following statements:

1. The programme is jointly developed by the Ministry of Electronics & IT and the International Telecommunication Union to mainstream AI-literacy in rural schools.
2. The initiative includes an adaptive gamified module that automatically reduces the cognitive load for learners who self-identify as non-English users.
3. It aims to create a national registry of AI-skilled youth that can be used for public-sector recruitment under the National AI Mission.
4. The programme is designed with tier-specific certification levels—from Foundation to Advanced—aligned with India's emerging AI Competency Standards.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 — Incorrect.
"AI for ALL / YUVA" is developed by **MEITY + Google India**, not ITU.

Statement 2 — Correct.
The platform includes **simple, multilingual-friendly, low-cognitive-load modules**, including adaptive features.

Statement 3 — Incorrect.
No national recruitment registry exists; the programme aims for **AI literacy**, not recruitment.

Statement 4 — Correct.
The programme includes **tiered learning levels** aligned with evolving national AI competency standards.

Thus, **two statements** are correct.

Q6. Rajaji National Park is geographically located across which of the following combinations of districts?

(a) Haridwar, Dehradun and Pauri Garhwal
(b) Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar and Bageshwar
(c) Dehradun, Champawat and Chamoli
(d) Tehri Garhwal, Rudraprayag and Almora

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Rajaji National Park spreads across the **Shivalik range** in **Haridwar**, **Dehradun**, and **Pauri Garhwal** districts. The other combinations do not fall within the park's notified boundary.

SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DAILY PRACTICE

GS-1 (History / Society)

Q1. ***"The pattern of urbanisation in post-Independence India reflects not merely economic transformation but also deep structural continuities of colonial urban planning."*** **Examine. (300+ words)**

Sample Answer:

Urbanisation in post-Independence India has expanded rapidly, yet its spatial logic and socio-economic outcomes exhibit strong continuities with colonial-era planning. While the economy diversified and large-scale rural migration accelerated, the morphology, governance, and hierarchies of Indian cities continue to reflect the colonial template of segregation and unequal service provisioning.

Colonial cities were structured around **dual geographies**: well-serviced administrative "civil lines" and neglected indigenous neighbourhoods. This segregation was reinforced by municipal prioritisation of elite enclaves, spatial zoning and racialised infrastructure distribution. Post-Independence expansions of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai show a **perpetuation of this core–periphery imbalance**. Wealthier zones receive privileged access to water, sewerage, policing, health and transport, while informal settlements—now accommodating over 65 million urban residents—mirror colonial-era "native towns."

Further, colonial urban planning relied on **centralised authority** with limited citizen participation. The reluctance after Independence to devolve real power to urban local bodies (ULBs) until the 74th Amendment reflects this continuity. Even today, metropolitan governance remains fragmented across parastatal agencies such as DDA, MMRDA and CMDA, reproducing the colonial tradition of bureaucratic, top-down urbanism.

In economic terms, colonial ports and commercial hubs—Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai—continue to dominate India's urban hierarchy. The spatial concentration of capital and employment around these cores demonstrates **path dependency**, where early infrastructural investments create long-term regional

disparities. Interior and smaller towns lag not simply due to post-Independence policies, but because colonial networks—railways, ports, cantonments—set enduring structural trajectories.

Migration and slum formation reflect another continuity. Colonial authorities treated migrant labour as transient, unentitled populations. Post-Independence planning continued this **exclusionary mindset** by restricting affordable housing, resulting in informal urbanisation as the dominant mode of city growth.

Nevertheless, there are significant transformations. Democratic pressures, rights-based movements, Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT, and urban welfare schemes attempt to redirect urban policy towards inclusiveness. Yet these reforms operate atop a historically inherited spatial architecture.

In conclusion, the trajectory of India's urbanisation reveals a layered interplay of change and continuity. While economic forces have reshaped urban growth, colonial planning legacies—segregated geographies, centralised control, and entrenched inequalities—continue to shape urban experiences. Addressing these continuities requires structural reforms, empowered ULBs, and inclusive spatial planning.

GS-2 (Polity & Governance)

Q2. ***"The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments promised democratic deepening but India's decentralised governance remains structurally constrained."*** **Critically analyse. (300+ words)**

Sample Answer:

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992–93) institutionalised Panchayats and Municipalities as the third tier of government, aiming to deepen grassroots democracy, enhance participatory governance, and promote decentralised development. While these reforms marked a paradigm shift, decentralisation in India remains **incomplete, uneven, and structurally limited**.

The Amendments mandated regular elections, reservation for women and marginalised groups, and formation of State Finance Commissions and District Planning Committees. These measures strengthened democratic representation: over 14 lakh elected representatives today make local bodies the world's largest democratic structure. Women's representation exceeds 50% in many states, reshaping local governance spaces.

However, **functional devolution** remains shallow. The Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules list 29 and 18 subjects respectively, but states have devolved only a small subset of powers. Key domains like police, land, water, and major infrastructure remain centralised. Many Panchayats function as implementing agencies rather than autonomous decision-makers.

Financial devolution is even weaker. Although Finance Commissions have increased tied and untied grants, ULBs and PRIs still rely heavily on state transfers. Own-source revenue remains negligible due to political reluctance to empower local taxation and weak administrative capacities. Without fiscal autonomy, local governments become dependent and constrained.

Administrative control further undermines decentralisation. Line departments dominate sectoral decisions, often bypassing elected bodies. The continued role of District Magistrates, parastatal agencies (e.g., urban development authorities), and state-appointed CEOs erodes the autonomy intended by the Amendments.

Moreover, capacity constraints—limited staff, lack of planning expertise, weak digital systems—restrict effective governance. Social inequalities, elite capture, and bureaucratic dominance often distort participatory mechanisms like Gram Sabhas.

Yet important success stories exist: Kerala's People's Plan, Karnataka and Rajasthan's Panchayati reforms, and Odisha's women-led Panchayats demonstrate that political will can transform local governance. Recent measures like the Fifteenth Finance Commission's performance grants, Mission Panchayat Development Index, and digital governance initiatives offer new avenues.

In conclusion, the 73rd and 74th Amendments created a democratic architecture but not the **real empowerment** necessary for decentralised governance. Overcoming structural constraints requires deeper fiscal, functional, and administrative devolution, greater transparency, and sustained state-level commitment.

GS-3 (Economy, Environment & Science-Tech)

Q3. ***Discuss India's challenge of achieving energy transition while ensuring energy security. What policy innovations are required to reconcile both objectives? (300+ words)***

Sample Answer:

India faces a dual imperative: accelerating its energy transition to meet climate commitments while ensuring affordable and reliable energy for a growing economy. As India aims to achieve **500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030** and net-zero by 2070, balancing decarbonisation with developmental needs becomes complex.

Energy security traditionally meant availability of fossil fuels at stable prices. For India, which imports ~85% of crude oil and ~50% of natural gas, geopolitical disruptions (West Asian tensions, Russia-Ukraine conflict) make dependency risky. However, the transition to renewables introduces **new vulnerabilities**—intermittency, storage constraints, and global concentration of critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel.

Renewables, especially solar and wind, have grown impressively, but integration into the grid requires flexible generation, advanced forecasting, and energy storage. The variability of renewables can jeopardise grid stability, especially during peak demand. India also faces a paradox where coal remains essential for baseload power while simultaneously being targeted for phasedown.

Key policy innovations are required:

1. **Diversified Energy Mix:**
   A balanced mix of solar, wind, hydropower, nuclear, green hydrogen, and bioenergy reduces both carbon intensity and import dependence.
2. **Scaling Green Hydrogen:**
   The National Green Hydrogen Mission can decarbonise hard-to-abate sectors (steel, fertilisers, heavy transport) and create export opportunities.
3. **Strengthening Storage Solutions:**
   India must expand battery manufacturing under PLI schemes, pump-storage hydropower, and grid-scale storage technologies.
4. **Critical Mineral Security:**
   Strategic investments abroad (Australia, Africa), domestic exploration, and recycling are essential to avoid over-dependence on China-dominated supply chains.

5. **Coal Sector Modernisation:**
   Rather than abrupt phase-out, India can adopt clean-coal technologies, carbon capture, efficiency upgrades, and repurposing old plants for storage and solar parks.
6. **Market Reforms:**
   Time-of-day tariffs, green day-ahead markets, and open access reforms can increase renewable absorption.
7. **Distributed Renewables:**
   Rooftop solar, solar irrigation, and community biogas improve resilience and reduce transmission stress.

In conclusion, India's energy transition and energy security are not contradictory goals. With strategic diversification, technological investment, and market reforms, India can achieve a **just, secure, and sustainable energy pathway**.

GS-4 (Ethics)

Q4. ***"Technological governance increasingly requires not only regulatory compliance but also ethical stewardship." Discuss with examples.***

Sample Answer:

Technological governance today extends far beyond compliance with statutory rules. As technologies such as AI, biotechnology, digital platforms, and surveillance systems reshape society, ethical stewardship becomes essential to ensure fairness, accountability, human dignity, and social trust. Regulations often lag behind rapid innovations, creating spaces where ethical norms must guide responsible behaviour.

AI systems illustrate this need. Although companies may comply with data protection laws, ethical stewardship requires addressing biases that disadvantage vulnerable groups. For instance, algorithmic credit scoring may legally process data but still discriminate if training datasets are skewed. Ethical AI frameworks—transparency, explainability, inclusive design—are necessary to mitigate these harms.

Similarly, social media platforms operate within legal limits but have immense power over public discourse. Ethically responsible governance involves curbing misinformation, preventing targeted manipulation, and designing algorithms that prioritise societal well-being over engagement-maximising profit incentives. Meta's oversight board and fact-checking initiatives represent early attempts but remain inadequate.

Biotechnology offers another example. Gene editing through CRISPR may meet regulatory approvals, yet the ethical implications—genetic privacy, germline interventions, inequality—require deliberation far beyond procedural compliance. The global moratorium on heritable genome editing reflects values-based governance.

In public administration, digital governance systems such as Aadhaar or predictive policing algorithms demand ethical oversight. Even if legally sanctioned, concerns about surveillance, exclusion, and data misuse call for proportionality, necessity, and accountability principles to guide their deployment. Ethical leadership is essential to ensure technology serves public interest, not state overreach.

Corporate governance echoes this shift. ESG frameworks increasingly evaluate companies not merely on legal adherence but on ethical responsibility towards environment, labour, and community. Ethical stewardship fosters long-term sustainability and trust.

Thus, technological governance must integrate ethics as a core pillar—anticipatory regulation, human-centric design, stakeholder participation, and transparency mechanisms. Laws provide minimum standards, but ethical stewardship defines **responsible, just, and humane** use of technology. Only the coexistence of both can ensure that technological progress does not outpace social values.

Current Affairs-

Q5. ***Critically examine China's strategy to counter air pollution. What lessons can India draw from it?***

Sample Answer:

China's strategy to address air pollution is one of the most ambitious atmospheric interventions globally. Since the early 2010s, China has transformed from a nation with some of the world's most polluted cities to one demonstrating measurable improvements. However, its strategy remains contested due to enforcement challenges, regional disparities, and environmental trade-offs.

China's flagship initiative, the **Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan (2013)**, focused on reducing PM2.5 levels in Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei, Yangtze Delta, and Pearl River Delta. Measures included shutting down coal-fired boilers, mandating ultra-low emissions technologies, restricting vehicular traffic, relocating heavy industries, and transitioning to cleaner fuels. Massive investments in renewable energy, expansion of electric mobility, and strict emission standards contributed to significant improvements. According to global assessments, Beijing's PM2.5 levels have dropped by over 35% since 2013.

A key strength of China's approach is **centralised enforcement**. The government deploys strict monitoring, satellite-based verification, heavy penalties, and direct accountability of local officials. This top-down approach allows rapid implementation but sometimes results in abrupt shutdowns, affecting livelihoods, especially in winter heating seasons.

However, criticisms persist. China's aggressive coal-to-gas transition initially created fuel shortages. Heavy industries often shift from regulated zones to hinterlands, causing **pollution relocation** rather than true reduction. Transparency remains limited, and local governments occasionally falsify data. Furthermore, China continues to expand coal capacity to support economic growth, creating an inherent contradiction between pollution control and energy security.

India can draw several lessons:

1. **Clear targets backed by scientific monitoring**: China's PM2.5-focused approach can inform India's NCAP, which currently lacks legally binding targets.
2. **Integrated regional planning**: Pollution does not respect state boundaries; regional airsheds like the Indo-Gangetic plain need coordinated action.
3. **Industrial accountability**: India can strengthen emission norms, digital monitoring, and penalty mechanisms.
4. **Clean energy expansion**: China's push for renewables, EVs, and gas infrastructure demonstrates the importance of large-scale investment.
5. **Avoid coercive implementation**: India must balance environmental goals with livelihoods through just transition frameworks.

In conclusion, China offers a valuable—though imperfect—model. India should adopt its scientific, coordinated, and investment-driven approach while avoiding heavy-handed policies and ensuring transparency, inclusion, and long-term sustainability.