

# THE PALA CIVIL TIMES



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## New Inclusion



**PYQ  
COMPASS**  
UPSC PREVIOUS YEARS QUESTIONS

## Practice questions

A dedicated section featuring UPSC-style Prelims and Mains practice questions based on the major issues, concepts, and debates discussed in today's newspaper.

## EDITORIALS DECODED FOR UPSC



### Score board

*The CBSE was ill-prepared for the examination reforms it undertook*



### India First can converge with America First



### Net ambiguity

*Airtel's priority plan reignites net neutrality debate*

## Snapshot

As the world moves at an increasingly rapid pace, with events constantly reshaping geopolitical and economic realities, it becomes essential to remain informed through objective and analytical understanding. In this edition of THE PALA CIVIL TIMES, we bring together a wide range of developments that hold significance from both examination and policy perspectives.

The international affairs section explores the latest initiatives announced at the recent Quad meeting and their implications for multilateral cooperation, maritime security, energy resilience and Indo-Pacific strategy. In national affairs, detailed explainers examine the anti-defection law, the Supreme Court's powers under Article 142 to deliver "complete justice", and the broader constitutional questions emerging from recent political developments.

This edition also carries analytical discussions based on editorials from The Hindu, The Indian Express and The Hindu Business Line. These include the CBSE On-Screen Marking controversy and the administrative challenges it highlights, India's evolving strategic engagement with the United States, and the debate surrounding Airtel's 5G network slicing service and concerns relating to net neutrality.

In the Moneywise section, readers can explore the economic implications of recent Quad-linked trade and critical minerals initiatives, along with a discussion on the evolving role of disinvestment as a source of public finance and economic restructuring.

## Resignation doesn't vaporise taint of defection : SC

Recent political developments in Tamil Nadu have revived debate over the relationship between resignation of legislators and disqualification under the Tenth Schedule. Three MLAs elected on All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) tickets resigned after supporting the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government in a confidence vote, even as disqualification petitions against them were pending. The controversy has raised constitutional questions regarding the powers of the Speaker, the operation of the anti-defection law and the legal effect of resignation during disqualification proceedings.

### STATIC CORE LINKAGE

#### Anti-Defection Law:

Constitutional Basis : Tenth Schedule of the Constitution

Added By : 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985

Objective : Prevent political defections and promote stability in elected governments

Decision-making Authority : Speaker/Chairman of the House

Judicial Review : Allowed under Supreme Court judgments.

#### Grounds for Disqualification

A legislator may be disqualified if:

- they voluntarily give up membership of their political party,
- vote or abstain contrary to the party whip without permission,
- or join another political party after election.

The phrase "voluntarily giving up membership" has been interpreted broadly by courts and may include conduct indicating political defection even without formal resignation from the party.

#### Can resignation prevent disqualification?

The central issue is whether MLAs facing anti-defection proceedings can avoid disqualification by resigning from the Assembly before adjudication.

Under Article 190(3)(b) of the Constitution the Speaker must verify whether a resignation is voluntary, and genuine.

- The Speaker cannot ordinarily investigate political motives behind resignation.
- Acceptance of resignation is subject to judicial review.

#### Supreme Court Judgment: Shrimanth Balasaheb Patel Case (2019)

In this case, the Supreme Court held that the Speaker must accept an MLA's resignation if it is voluntary and genuine, but resignation does not automatically wipe out prior acts of defection under the Tenth Schedule. The Court clarified that disqualification can still apply if the act of defection occurred before resignation, and the Speaker's decision remains subject to judicial review.

### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Which one of the Schedules of the Constitution of India contains provisions regarding the anti-defection? (2014)

- Second Schedule
- Fifth Schedule
- Eighth Schedule
- Tenth Schedule

### Practice questions

Q. With reference to the anti-defection law, consider the following statements:

1. A legislator's resignation automatically prevents disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.
2. The Speaker can examine whether a resignation is voluntary and genuine before accepting it.
3. The Supreme Court has held that disqualification may still apply if the act of defection occurred before resignation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

### RELEVANCE

GS II : Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

## The judiciary's role in complete justice

Article 142 of the Constitution empowers the Supreme Court of India to pass any order necessary for doing "complete justice" in matters before it. This extraordinary power enables the Court to provide effective remedies even where existing laws or procedural rules are inadequate. It acts as a constitutional safety valve to prevent injustice and uphold fairness in exceptional situations.

### Inherent Powers and Due Process of Law

The concept of complete justice is closely linked with the principle of due process of law and natural justice. The Supreme Court, as the custodian of the Constitution, may invoke Article 142 where strict legal procedures fail to adequately address injustice. The provision reflects the constitutional preference for substantive justice over mere procedural compliance and allows the Court to protect fairness, equity and constitutional morality.

### Judicial Interpretation of Article 142

In *Delhi Judicial Service Association v. State of Gujarat*, the Supreme Court held that its powers under Article 142 are of a distinct constitutional character and are not limited by ordinary statutory restrictions. Similarly, in *Hitesh Bhatnagar v. Deepa Bhatnagar*, the Court emphasised that this extraordinary jurisdiction must be exercised with great caution and responsibility to ensure fairness and prevent misuse.

### Practice questions

Q.) With reference to Article 142 of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass orders necessary for doing complete justice in matters before it.
2. The powers under Article 142 are subject to ordinary statutory limitations imposed by Parliament.
3. High Courts exercise powers identical to Article 142 through Article 226 of the Constitution.
4. The concept of complete justice is closely associated with principles of natural justice and substantive fairness.

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) 2 and 4 only

### Why the Power is Unique to the Apex Court

Although High Courts exercise wide powers under Article 226, they do not possess powers equivalent to Article 142. In *Anil Kumar Jain v. Maya Jain*, the Supreme Court clarified that Article 142 grants a unique residuary jurisdiction available exclusively to the apex court. This allows the Court to address complex and evolving social, political and legal realities where existing laws may be insufficient.



### Contemporary Relevance and Debate

The Supreme Court recently invoked Article 142 while recognising safe travel on National Highways as part of the Right to Life under Article 21. The exercise of such powers is sometimes criticised as judicial overreach because it may appear to enter domains traditionally associated with the Legislature or Executive. However, supporters argue that Article 142 enables the judiciary to uphold constitutional values and ensure complete justice when legal or institutional gaps threaten fundamental rights and public welfare.

### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



PYQ  
COMPASS

Q.) Who/which of the following is the Custodian of the Constitution of India? (2015)

- (a) The President of India
- (b) The Prime Minister of India
- (c) The Lok Sabha Secretariat
- (d) The Supreme Court of India

## Quad announces maritime plans amid Hormuz crisis

At the 11th Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), the Quad grouping announced new initiatives to strengthen maritime security, maritime surveillance and energy resilience in the Indo-Pacific region. The initiatives come amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Persian Gulf and the South China Sea, highlighting growing concerns over freedom of navigation, secure maritime commerce and regional strategic stability.

### STATIC CORE LINKAGE

#### Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

**Members** : India, United States, Japan, Australia

**Nature** : Strategic and diplomatic grouping

**Focus Areas** : Indo-Pacific security, maritime cooperation, resilient supply chains, technology, disaster response and infrastructure

**Broad Objective** : Promote a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

#### Major Initiatives Announced at the Meeting

##### Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration Initiative

- Aims to integrate and leverage maritime surveillance capabilities of Quad countries.
- Intended to improve information sharing, maritime monitoring, and coordination during emergencies and humanitarian operations.
- Enhances situational awareness across the Indo-Pacific region.

##### Quad Ports of the Future Partnership

- Intended to strengthen resilient and modern port infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific.
- Includes pilot port infrastructure project in Fiji.



##### Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) Initiative (expanded)

- Expands near real-time commercial maritime tracking and domain awareness.
- Provides maritime data support to Indo-Pacific countries.
- Helps monitor illegal activities at sea, maritime disruptions, and shipping movement and security risks.

##### Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security

- Focuses on strengthening regional energy resilience.
- Promotes emergency response coordination, secure energy supply chains, and cooperation during disruptions in maritime energy routes.

### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times. Discuss.

(GS II - International Relations - 2020)

### Practice questions

Q.) With reference to the recent initiatives announced at the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), consider the following statements:

1. The Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration initiative aims to improve maritime information sharing and surveillance coordination among Quad countries.
2. The Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative provides near real-time maritime tracking and awareness support to countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
3. The Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security focuses on strengthening regional energy resilience and emergency response coordination.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only  
 (b) 1 and 2 only  
 (c) 2 and 3 only  
 (d) 1, 2 and 3

### RELEVANCE

GS II : Bilateral, regional and global groupings involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

## Score board (The Hindu 27-05-2026)

The recent controversy surrounding the introduction of On-Screen Marking (OSM) in Class 12 board examinations has brought renewed attention to structural weaknesses within India's examination and educational governance systems. Under the OSM system, **physical answer sheets were scanned and digitally evaluated by examiners on computer screens with the objective of improving transparency, speed and standardisation in evaluation.** However, the large-scale rollout reportedly resulted in widespread complaints relating to mismatched answer scripts, poor scan quality, unevaluated supplementary sheets and unexpected reduction in marks, creating anxiety among lakhs of students and raising concerns over the preparedness of institutions for technology-driven reforms.



### Challenges in Policy Implementation and Administrative Preparedness

The controversy highlights the challenge of implementing large-scale digital reforms without adequate institutional preparation. Reports indicate that evaluators were not sufficiently trained for the new interface and that standard operating procedures (SOPs), quality-control mechanisms and pilot testing were inadequate before nationwide implementation. The issue reflects not merely a technological failure, but also weaknesses in administrative planning, risk assessment and execution capacity within educational institutions.

### Impact on Students and Educational Credibility

Many students have reported discrepancies between expected and awarded marks, especially in descriptive subjects requiring interpretive assessment. Technical problems such as poor scan readability, portal failures and delays in re-evaluation further intensified uncertainty and psychological stress among students. This issue has affected institutional credibility of the Central Board of Secondary Education, as examination systems are expected to maintain fairness, reliability and public trust. A decline in overall pass percentage indicate the scale of concern generated by the process.

### Broader Lessons for Digital Governance in Education

The episode demonstrates that digitisation alone cannot ensure efficiency or fairness unless supported by robust human and institutional systems. It underline the importance of balancing technological innovation with educational sensitivity and administrative accountability.

### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) Implementation of information and Communication Technology (ICT) based Projects / Programmes usually suffers in terms of certain vital factors. Identify these factors, and suggest measures for their effective implementation.

(GS II – Governance – 2019)

### Practice questions

Q. With reference to digital reforms in India's examination system, consider the following statements:

1. On-Screen Marking (OSM) seeks to improve standardisation and efficiency in evaluation by digitally assessing scanned answer scripts.
2. Since digital evaluation reduces direct human handling of answer scripts, concerns regarding transparency and accountability are automatically eliminated.
3. Large-scale technological reforms in education require supporting institutional mechanisms such as training, quality control and grievance redressal systems.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**RELEVANCE : GS II : Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.**

## India First can converge with America First (Indian Express - 27-05-2026)

Recent interactions between India and the United States have taken place against the backdrop of growing unease over issues such as tariffs, visa policies and shifting geopolitical priorities. During his visit to India, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio attempted to reassure New Delhi that Washington remains committed to strengthening the long-term strategic partnership between the two countries. He clarified that recent U.S. policy measures were part of a broader domestic economic and immigration restructuring exercise rather than actions specifically directed against India.

### India's Strategic Position & Diplomatic Messaging

India used the opportunity to clearly articulate its broader foreign policy priorities. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar outlined a five-point framework emphasising **dialogue and diplomacy, freedom of maritime commerce, adherence to international law, opposition to the weaponisation of market access and resources, and the importance of resilient supply chains and trusted partnerships**. These positions reflected India's attempt to balance strategic cooperation with the United States while safeguarding its own economic and geopolitical interests in an increasingly fragmented global order.

### Quad Cooperation and Indo-Pacific Priorities

A major focus of the visit was the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting involving India, United States, Japan and Australia. The meeting announced initiatives related to maritime surveillance, port infrastructure, critical minerals and energy security, reinforcing the Quad's role in strengthening strategic coordination in the Indo-Pacific. However, concerns persist regarding the future direction of the grouping, especially amid signs of improving U.S.-China engagement and indications that Washington may be reallocating greater strategic attention toward West Asia.



### Strategic Uncertainty and China Factor

The evolving geopolitical environment has created uncertainty regarding the long-term trajectory of India-U.S. strategic convergence. The possibility of tactical U.S. engagement with countries such as Pakistan in light of changing strategic priorities has reinforced India's need to maintain strategic autonomy. At the same time, India's competitive relationship with a rising China continues to shape its Indo-Pacific outlook. These developments indicate that Indo-U.S. partnership will continue to be influenced by wider global power shifts and regional security calculations.

### Importance of Domestic Capability Building

According to India, international partnerships alone cannot secure long-term strategic influence unless backed by sustained domestic economic growth, technological advancement and institutional modernisation. While the United States openly pursues an "America First" approach, India similarly emphasises an "India First" framework focused on national interest and strategic resilience.

#### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) "What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India's National self-esteem and ambitions" Explain with suitable examples.  
 (GS II - International Relations - 2019)

#### RELEVANCE

GS II : Bilateral, regional and global groupings involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

#### Practice questions

Q.) With reference to the recent Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), consider the following statements:

1. The Quad's recent initiatives on maritime surveillance and maritime domain awareness are linked to concerns over freedom of navigation and secure maritime commerce in the Indo-Pacific.
2. India's emphasis on resilient supply chains and opposition to the weaponisation of market access reflects the increasing integration of economic security with strategic diplomacy.
3. Since the Quad is a treaty-based military alliance, its member countries are obligated to provide collective military response during regional conflicts.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

## Net ambiguity (TH BusinessLine : 27-05-2026)

The debate around 5G network slicing has gained prominence in India following the launch of "Priority Postpaid" by Bharti Airtel, the country's first commercial consumer-focused 5G network slicing service. Through this offering, Airtel promises faster and more stable 5G connectivity to premium postpaid users by allocating them a differentiated network experience. The move marks an important shift in India's telecom sector, where operators are now exploring advanced 5G capabilities not only to improve user experience but also to create new revenue models in an increasingly competitive market.

### Understanding 5G Network Slicing

5G network slicing is a technology that allows telecom operators to divide a single physical 5G network into multiple virtual "slices," each designed for a specific type of service or user group. Instead of every user sharing the network equally at all times, operators can create separate virtual lanes for different requirements. For example, one slice may prioritise high-speed video streaming, another may support industrial automation, while another may provide premium connectivity to selected subscribers. In simple terms, it functions like creating dedicated lanes on a highway without constructing an entirely new road.

### Why Telecom Operators Are Interested

The introduction of network slicing reflects the broader transformation of the telecom industry in the 5G era. Indian telecom companies have witnessed rapid growth in data consumption, but their revenues per user have remained relatively low. By offering premium connectivity services through network slicing, telecom operators aim to generate additional revenue and recover the heavy investments made in 5G infrastructure and spectrum acquisition.

### Concerns Over Net Neutrality

Despite its technological and commercial advantages, Airtel's initiative has triggered concerns regarding net neutrality — the principle that all internet traffic should be treated equally without discrimination. Prioritising premium postpaid users may create a **class-based differentiation** in mobile internet access, where higher-paying customers receive better network performance during periods of congestion. A parliamentary committee headed by Nishikant Dubey has sought explanations from the Department of Telecommunications and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) regarding the implications of such services. The concern is that if premium users receive preferential treatment, ordinary prepaid users may indirectly experience slower or lower-quality service.

### Long-Term Policy Direction

Earlier, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India had restricted content-based differential pricing models such as zero-rating plans. However, 5G slicing creates a new regulatory grey area because the differentiation is now based on users rather than specific content or applications. Policymakers may therefore need to revisit existing telecom regulations, spectrum pricing frameworks and quality-of-service norms.

#### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) With reference to communication technologies, what is/are the difference/differences between LTE (Long-Term Evolution) and VoLTE (Voice over Long-Term Evolution)? (2019)

1. LTE is commonly marketed as 3G and VoLTE is commonly marketed as advanced 3G.
2. LTE is data-only technology and VoLTE is voice-only technology.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

#### Practice questions

Q.) With reference to 5G network slicing and recent developments in India's telecom sector, consider the following statements:

1. 5G network slicing allows a single physical network to be divided into multiple virtual networks designed for different services or user groups.
2. Bharti Airtel recently launched India's first commercial consumer-focused 5G network slicing service for premium postpaid users.
3. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has already issued explicit regulations permitting telecom operators to provide differential quality of service to selected mobile users through 5G slicing.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

#### RELEVANCE

GS III : Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics

## India, U.S. draw up deal on rare earth elements

India and the United States recently concluded a framework agreement on critical minerals and rare earth elements on the sidelines of the 11th Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The agreement aims to deepen cooperation across the entire supply chain of critical minerals, including mining, processing, recycling and investment activities. It reflects the growing strategic importance of securing reliable supplies of rare earths elements that are essential for advanced manufacturing, clean energy technologies, semiconductors, electric vehicles and digital infrastructure.

### Global Concerns Over Supply Chain Vulnerability

The development comes amid increasing global concerns over concentrated supply chains and China's export restrictions on rare earth elements and strategic minerals in 2025. Since critical minerals are indispensable for emerging technologies and green energy transitions, countries are increasingly viewing access to these resources as a matter of **economic security and strategic resilience**. In this context, India and the United States identified secure and diversified supply chains for critical minerals as a shared strategic priority.

### Quad Critical Minerals Initiative

The four Quad countries, India, United States, Japan and Australia have also launched a separate Quad Critical Minerals Initiative aimed at mobilising nearly \$20 billion in public and private investment support. The initiative seeks to establish stable and resilient supply chains in Quad partner countries by reducing vulnerabilities from excessive dependence on a limited number of suppliers.

### India's National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

For India, these agreements align closely with the objectives of the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**, launched in 2025 to promote self-reliance in the critical mineral sector. Under the mission, the Geological Survey of India has been tasked with large-scale exploration projects, while the **government has identified 30 minerals as critical to India's economic and strategic interests**. The inclusion of 24 of these minerals under Part D of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 has strengthened the Centre's authority in regulating and auctioning mining rights related to these strategically important resources.

### Future Implications

As global economies transition toward renewable energy systems, battery storage, artificial intelligence, and advanced electronics, access to critical minerals will increasingly influence industrial growth, strategic autonomy and geopolitical influence. By strengthening cooperation in mining, processing, financing and technology partnerships, India seeks to secure resource availability to position itself as an important participant in emerging global supply chains.

## PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q.) Which of the following statements about Rare Earth Elements (REEs) and Critical Minerals is/are correct? (2026)

1. Modern innovations technological including Artificial Intelligence, robotics and space exploration extensively utilise Rare Earth Elements (REEs).
2. China has the highest share in mining of REEs followed by India.
3. The Government of India launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) in 2025 to establish a robust framework for self-reliance in the critical mineral sector.
4. Rare Earth Elements are a set of 13 metallic elements.

Select the answer using the code given below :

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4
- (d) 1, 2 and 4

## Practice questions

Q.) With reference to recent initiatives on critical minerals and rare earth elements involving India, consider the following statements:

1. The India–U.S. framework on critical minerals seeks cooperation in areas such as mining, processing, recycling and investment across the supply chain.
2. The Quad Critical Minerals Initiative involves only government funding and excludes private sector participation.
3. Under the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), the Geological Survey of India has been tasked with large-scale exploration projects for critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

## RELEVANCE

**GS II : Bilateral, regional and global groupings involving India and/or affecting India's interests.**

## Strategic Disinvestment of IMPCL

The Government of India has approved the strategic disinvestment of Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL), a Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of AYUSH, with Skymap Pharmaceuticals Private Limited emerging as the strategic buyer. The transaction involves transfer of 100% government equity and management control through a competitive bidding process. The development highlights the evolving nature of India's disinvestment policy aimed at improving efficiency, mobilising resources and redefining the role of the public sector in the post-reform economy.

### STATIC CORE LINKAGE

#### Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL)

Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) established in 1978

Administrative Ministry : Ministry of AYUSH

Core Objective : Manufacture and supply standardised Ayurvedic and Unani medicines

Present Development : 100% strategic disinvestment approved.

Skymap Pharmaceuticals Private Limited approved as strategic buyer.

**Disinvestment** : Process through which the government sells or reduces its ownership in Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs/PSUs).

**Strategic Disinvestment** : Sale of substantial government stake along with transfer of management control to a strategic buyer.

It involves sale of 51% or more shares.

**Minority Stake Sale (Token Disinvestment)** : Government sells only a limited shareholding while retaining management control and majority ownership.

#### Evolution of India's Disinvestment Policy

Pre-1991 : PSUs played central role in planned economic development

1991 Economic Reforms : Disinvestment initiated as part of liberalisation and PSU reforms.

Rangarajan Committee (1991) : Recommended systematic disinvestment strategy

1997 : Disinvestment Commission established

Present : Department of Investment and Public Asset Management under Ministry of Finance.

#### Objectives of Disinvestment

- Improve efficiency of public enterprises.
- Reduce fiscal burden on government.
- Mobilise resources for development expenditure.
- Encourage private participation and competition.
- Allow government to focus on strategic and social sectors.

#### PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.



Q. In the context of governance, consider the following: (2010)

1. Encouraging Foreign Direct Investment inflows
2. Privatization of higher educational Institutions
3. Down-sizing of bureaucracy
4. Selling/offloading the shares of Public Sector Undertakings

Which of the above can be used as measures to control the fiscal deficit in India?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3  
 (b) 2, 3 and 4  
 (c) 1, 2 and 4  
 (d) 3 and 4 only

#### Practice questions

Q.) With reference to disinvestment in India, consider the following statements:

1. Strategic disinvestment involves transfer of management control along with substantial sale of government equity in a Public Sector Enterprise.
2. The strategic disinvestment of Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL) involves transfer of 100% government equity to a strategic buyer.
3. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management functions under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
4. Under India's disinvestment policy, the government may reduce its stake below 51% in non-strategic Public Sector Enterprises through strategic disinvestment.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only  
 (b) 1 and 3 only  
 (c) 2 and 4 only  
 (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

#### RELEVANCE

GS III : Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth.

## Practice Questions and answers

Q. With reference to the anti-defection law, consider the following statements:

1. A legislator's resignation automatically prevents disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.
2. The Speaker can examine whether a resignation is voluntary and genuine before accepting it.
3. The Supreme Court has held that disqualification may still apply if the act of defection occurred before resignation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only**

**Statement 1 is incorrect.** Resignation from the legislature does not automatically protect a member from disqualification under the Tenth Schedule. The Supreme Court clarified that if the act of defection had already taken place before resignation, disqualification proceedings may still continue.

**Statement 2 is correct.** Under Article 190, the Speaker must verify whether a resignation is voluntary and genuine before accepting it, but cannot ordinarily reject it by examining political motives.

**Statement 3 is correct.** In the *Shrimanth Balasaheb Patel v. Speaker, Karnataka Legislative Assembly* case, the Supreme Court held that disqualification relates back to the original act of defection and is not automatically nullified by subsequent resignation.

Q.) With reference to Article 142 of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:

1. Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass orders necessary for doing complete justice in matters before it.
2. The powers under Article 142 are subject to ordinary statutory limitations imposed by Parliament.
3. High Courts exercise powers identical to Article 142 through Article 226 of the Constitution.
4. The concept of complete justice is closely associated with principles of natural justice and substantive fairness.

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) 2 and 4 only

**Answer: (a) 1 and 4 only**

**Statements 1 and 4 are correct.** Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court of India to pass any order necessary for doing complete justice in cases before it. The provision is closely linked with principles of natural justice, due process of law and substantive fairness.

**Statement 2 is incorrect.** In *Delhi Judicial Service Association v. State of Gujarat*, the Court observed that statutory restrictions cannot curtail this constitutional power when exercised to secure complete justice.

**Statement 3 is also incorrect.** Although High Courts possess wide powers under Article 226, they do not enjoy powers identical to Article 142. In *Anil Kumar Jain v. Maya Jain*, the Supreme Court clarified that Article 142 grants a unique residuary jurisdiction exclusively to the apex court.

## Practice Questions and answers

Q.) With reference to the recent initiatives announced at the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), consider the following statements:

1. The Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration initiative aims to improve maritime information sharing and surveillance coordination among Quad countries.
2. The Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative provides near real-time maritime tracking and awareness support to countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
3. The Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security focuses on strengthening regional energy resilience and emergency response coordination.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans : (d) 1, 2 and 3**

**Statement 1 – Correct** The Quad announced the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration initiative to integrate and leverage the maritime surveillance capabilities of Quad countries.

**Statement 2 – Correct.** The Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative aims to provide near real-time commercial maritime awareness data to countries across the Indo-Pacific region.

**Statement 3 – Correct.** The Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security was launched to strengthen regional energy resilience, secure maritime energy supply chains, and emergency response cooperation during disruptions affecting energy transport routes.

Q.) With reference to digital reforms in India's examination system, consider the following statements:

1. On-Screen Marking (OSM) seeks to improve standardisation and efficiency in evaluation by digitally assessing scanned answer scripts.
2. Since digital evaluation reduces direct human handling of answer scripts, concerns regarding transparency and accountability are automatically eliminated.
3. Large-scale technological reforms in education require supporting institutional mechanisms such as training, quality control and grievance redressal systems.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

**Statement 1 – Correct** On-Screen Marking (OSM) was introduced to improve the speed, efficiency, transparency and standardisation of evaluation through digital assessment of scanned answer scripts.

**Statement 2 – Incorrect** Digitisation does not automatically eliminate concerns regarding transparency or accountability. The recent controversy demonstrated that issues such as poor scan quality, technical glitches, mismatched answer scripts, evaluator fatigue and weak grievance redressal mechanisms can still affect fairness and credibility in the evaluation process.

**Statement 3 – Correct** Experts have emphasised that technological reforms in education require adequate evaluator training, phased implementation, strong quality-control systems, infrastructure readiness and effective grievance redressal mechanisms. Without these institutional safeguards, digital reforms may create new governance and implementation challenges instead of solving existing problems.

### Practice Questions and answers

Q. With reference to the recent Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), consider the following statements:

1. The Quad's recent initiatives on maritime surveillance and maritime domain awareness are linked to concerns over freedom of navigation and secure maritime commerce in the Indo-Pacific.
2. India's emphasis on resilient supply chains and opposition to the weaponisation of market access reflects the increasing integration of economic security with strategic diplomacy.
3. Since the Quad is a treaty-based military alliance, its member countries are obligated to provide collective military response during regional conflicts.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

**Statement 1 – Correct.** Rising tensions in the South China Sea, instability around the Strait of Hormuz and concerns regarding secure maritime trade routes are closely linked to the recent Quad initiatives on maritime surveillance and maritime domain awareness.

**Statement 2 – Correct.** India highlighted resilient supply chains, opposition to the weaponisation of market access and trusted partnerships during the meeting as they influence economic security, technology, geopolitics and strategic diplomacy significantly.

**Statement 3 – Incorrect.** The Quad is not a treaty-based military alliance like North Atlantic Treaty Organization and does not impose collective military obligations on its members. It is an informal strategic grouping focused on cooperation in areas such as maritime security, critical technologies, infrastructure, disaster response and Indo-Pacific stability.

Q.) With reference to 5G network slicing and recent developments in India's telecom sector, consider the following statements:

1. 5G network slicing allows a single physical network to be divided into multiple virtual networks designed for different services or user groups.
2. Bharti Airtel recently launched India's first commercial consumer-focused 5G network slicing service for premium postpaid users.
3. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has already issued explicit regulations permitting telecom operators to provide differential quality of service to selected mobile users through 5G slicing.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

**Statement 1 – Correct.** 5G network slicing is a key feature of 5G architecture that enables telecom operators to create multiple virtual and independent "slices" within the same physical network infrastructure. Each slice can be optimised for different needs such as high-speed connectivity, industrial automation, gaming or premium mobile services.

**Statement 2 – Correct.** Bharti Airtel recently launched "Priority Postpaid," described as India's first commercial consumer-oriented 5G network slicing service. The service aims to provide premium postpaid customers with faster and more stable connectivity.

**Statement 3 – Incorrect.** The present issue is considered a regulatory grey area. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has previously acted against content-based differential pricing models such as zero-rating plans, but there are no explicit regulations clearly permitting or fully regulating user-based service differentiation through 5G slicing.

## Practice Questions and answers

Q.) With reference to disinvestment in India, consider the following statements:

1. Strategic disinvestment involves transfer of management control along with substantial sale of government equity in a Public Sector Enterprise.
2. The strategic disinvestment of Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL) involves transfer of 100% government equity to a strategic buyer.
3. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management functions under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
4. Under India's disinvestment policy, the government may reduce its stake below 51% in non-strategic Public Sector Enterprises through strategic disinvestment.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 4 only

**Statement 1 – Correct.** Strategic disinvestment refers to sale of a substantial portion of government shareholding in a PSU along with transfer of management control to a strategic buyer. It differs from minority stake sale where the government generally retains management control.

**Statement 2 – Correct.** The Union Government approved the strategic disinvestment of Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited, a CPSE under the Ministry of AYUSH, with transfer of 100% equity shareholding and management control to Skymap Pharmaceuticals Private Limited.

**Statement 3 – Incorrect.** The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) functions under the Ministry of Finance, not the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

**Statement 4 – Correct.** Under strategic disinvestment, particularly in non-strategic sectors, government shareholding may be reduced below 51%, including complete transfer of ownership in certain cases.

Q.) With reference to recent initiatives on critical minerals and rare earth elements involving India, consider the following statements:

1. The India–U.S. framework on critical minerals seeks cooperation in areas such as mining, processing, recycling and investment across the supply chain.
2. The Quad Critical Minerals Initiative involves only government funding and excludes private sector participation.
3. Under the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), the Geological Survey of India has been tasked with large-scale exploration projects for critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

**Statement 1 – Correct.** India and the United States concluded a framework agreement on critical minerals and rare earths to strengthen cooperation across the supply chain, including mining, processing, recycling and related investments.

**Statement 2 – Incorrect.** The Quad Critical Minerals Initiative specifically aims to mobilise both government and private-sector support, amounting to nearly \$20 billion, across Quad partner countries.

**Statement 3 – Correct.** Under the National Critical Mineral Mission, launched in 2025, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been assigned extensive exploration responsibilities for critical minerals between 2024–25 and 2030–31.