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UPSC Mains 2025 GS IV

Year-wise PYQ pack · WRAP model answers with canonical links

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<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains/gs-4/2025/>

Q1 · 10 marks

(a) In the present digital age, social media has revolutionised our way of communication and interaction. However, it has raised several ethical issues and challenges. Describe the key ethical dilemmas in this regard. (b) "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment but a product of civil education and adherence of the rule of law." Examine the significance of constitutional morality for public servant highlighting the role in promoting good governance and ensuring accountability in public administration.

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics in Public Administration

Revision summary

Social media speeds speech and also rumour, hate, privacy harm and blurred official voice.

The ethical knots are truth versus virality, privacy versus publicity, and freedom versus incitement.

Constitutional morality, as **Ambedkar** taught, is learned respect for constitutional forms, not a natural feeling.

For a civil servant it means equality, dignity, reasoned process and files that can face a court.

Good governance and accountability rest on that habit when popular anger or a minister wants a shortcut.

Introduction

A phone is now a **public square, a rumour mill and a file**. Part (a) asks what **ethical knots** that square ties. Part (b) asks the civil servant to live by **constitutional morality**, which Dr **Ambedkar** said is **not a natural sentiment**. **Together they are one paper: how we speak, and what law we obey when we speak for the State.**

Body

(a) Ethical dilemmas of social media

Truth versus speed. A forward can ruin a person before a fact-check. The dilemma is between **freedom of speech** (**Article 19**) and **harm** (dignity, riot, suicide). **Kant's** test - would

I will a world of untested accusation? - says no. Mill's harm principle says the State may step in when speech **incites violence**, not when it merely offends.

Privacy versus publicity. A viral video of a patient or a child is a **dignity** wound. The right to privacy after **Puttaswamy** is an ethical floor, not only a case name.

Identity versus civic friendship. Algorithms reward **anger**. Communal and gendered hate is easy; **fraternity** (the Preamble) is hard. The dilemma for a public servant is whether to **mute, rebut, or ignore**. Silence can be prudence; it can also be **cowardice**.

Opacity of the platform. A private company curates a public sphere. Who owes **accountability** - the user, the firm, or the State? Over-censorship is another dilemma: a takedown can hide a genuine whistle-blower.

Professional boundary. An officer's personal handle can look like an **official verdict**. Integrity here is **not using the office to trend**.

(b) Constitutional morality for the public servant

- **Ambedkar**, borrowing Grote, said **Indians must learn to respect constitutional forms**: majority is not licence, office is not property. The Supreme Court has used the phrase in **Manoj Narula**, **Navtej Johar**, and the **Delhi government** cases to mean **reason, equality, dignity and institutional process**.

For a civil servant this is **not poetry**. It is **Article 14** in a licence, **Article 21** in a demolition, **neutrality** in a communal file, and **rule of law** when a minister wants a shortcut. **Good governance** is predictable, reasoned, recorded action. **Accountability** is the file that can be shown to a court, a CAG, and a citizen. Constitutional morality is the habit that makes those three possible when **popular morality** or **political pressure** pulls the other way.

Gandhi wanted means as clean as ends. **Ambedkar** wanted **forms that protect the weak**. **The officer needs both: a clean hand and a constitutional head**.

Flow diagram

Social media -> Truth privacy hate
 Constitutional morality -> Good governance
 Constitutional morality -> Accountability
 Truth privacy hate -> Constitutional morality

Conclusion

Social media creates dilemmas of truth, privacy, hate and official voice. Constitutional morality is the trained respect for rights and process that lets a public servant govern fairly and answer for every file, even when the crowd is loud.

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Q2 · 10 marks

(a) Carl von Clausewitz once said, "War is a diplomacy by other means." Critically analyse the above statement in the present context of contemporary geo-political conflict. (b) Keeping the national security in mind, examine the ethical dilemmas related to controversies over environmental clearance of development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas in the country.

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics in Public Administration

Revision summary

Clausewitz is right that wars have political aims; he is incomplete because civilians, nuclear weapons and non-state actors change the moral math.

Just-war rules and **Gandhi's** stress on means still bind a democracy.

Border projects pit delay-as-threat against forest, landslide and tribal consent.

The ethical path is necessity with least harm, not a fake choice between soldier and tree.

Integrity is a file that records both the threat and the ecology.

Introduction

Clausewitz wrote that **war is the continuation of policy by other means**. He was describing **Europe's cabinets**. Part (a) asks whether that line still explains **today's wars**, and whether it **should**. **Part (b) brings the same tension home: a road or a radar in an ecological border**, where **security, forest and people** do not vote as one.

Body

(a) Clausewitz in contemporary conflict

- **The insight still holds in one sense: Hamas and Israel, Russia and Ukraine, the Red Sea** are not earthquakes. They are **political projects** that chose force. Diplomacy did not vanish; it **failed or was refused**, and the gun became the memo.

The critique is ethical and empirical. **Nuclear weapons** make a "continuation" that can end the continuer. **Non-state actors** do not sit in Clausewitz's cabinet. **Information war** harms civilians without a front. **Just war** tradition - jus ad bellum (just cause, last resort, right authority) and jus in bello (distinction, proportionality) - says that even a political aim does **not** wash **every means**. **Gandhi rejected the means-ends split**: "They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'." **A civil servant of a nuclear democracy should hear both: war can be policy, and policy can be a crime** if it targets a hospital.

So the statement is **analytically useful** and **morally incomplete**. Diplomacy remains the first means; war is the last, and even then **law of armed conflict** binds.

(b) Environmental clearance in sensitive borders

A **highway in Arunachal**, a **radar in a sanctuary**, a **hydel dam in a seismic Himalaya**: the Ministry of Defence will say **delay is a Chinese gift**. The forest officer will say **a landslide is also a security failure**. Tribes will say **consent under FRA** is not anti-national.

- **Dilemmas: secrecy versus EIA public hearing; strategic time versus ecological time; national security versus local livelihood; temporary camp versus permanent town.** Ethics

of **prudence** (Aristotle) asks for the **least harmful adequate project: tunnel over a scarified slope, night-time restriction, no-go core, compensatory** that is real. **National security is a public good**; so is a **standing forest that holds a border river**. The officer's integrity is to **write both in the file**, not to bury the bird survey or to leak the map.

The ethical frame is **stewardship plus honest necessity**, not "green versus jawan" as a television fight.

Flow diagram

Clausewitz: war as policy -> Just war limits

Border project -> Security

Border project -> Ecology FRA

Security -> Reasoned clearance

Ecology FRA -> Reasoned clearance

Conclusion

War still continues politics, but ethics and nuclear risk refuse a blank cheque to force. In border clearances the same mind must hold security, ecology and consent in one reasoned file.

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Q3 · 10 marks

(a) "Those who in trouble untroubled are, Will trouble trouble itself." - Thiruvalluvar. (b) "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes." - William James. (c) "The strength of a society is not in its laws, but in the morality of its people." - Swami Vivekananda.

GS IV · 2025 · Attitude

Revision summary

- **Thiruvalluvar's line is about equanimity:** a calm officer can master a crisis that a panicked one worsens.

William James argued that changing attention and attitude can change a life; for an officer that means seva, not cynicism, without blaming the poor.

Vivekananda held that a society's real strength is the people's morality, not the thickness of the statute book.

Laws still matter; they work when character supports them.

Together the quotes train inner weather, professional will and social ethics.

Introduction

UPSC here gives **three lamps**, not three slogans. A good answer **explains the line**, then **walks it into a tehsil**. Thiruvalluvar speaks of **inner weather**. William James speaks of **the mind's lever**. **Vivekananda** speaks of **the people's character**. Together they are **self, will and society**.

Body

(a) Thiruvalluvar: the untroubled in trouble

The Kural says, in substance, that **those who stay calm when trouble comes will make trouble itself tired**. This is not numbness. It is **equanimity** - what the Gita calls samatva, what stoics call meeting what one cannot yet change without panic. A **Deputy Commissioner** in a cloudburst who shouts at every junior **spreads fear**; one who **prioritises, delegates and still feels** the dead, **governs**. Emotional intelligence here is an **ethical skill**, not a soft extra. The quote also warns against **performative panic** on television. Courage is **steady work**.

(b) William James: alter the attitude, alter the life

James, the American psychologist, meant that **habit of attention** shapes destiny. A bitter officer who sees every citizen as a cheat will **find cheats** and **miss the honest poor**. A growth attitude - I can learn this flood protocol - is **objectivity plus hope**. The ethical risk is **blaming the victim**: telling a hungry person to "change attitude" is cruelty. James is for the **agent's inner freedom**, not for a State that withdraws welfare. For a civil servant, attitude is **seva versus darbar**: the same desk can be a service or a throne.

(c) **Vivekananda**: strength in morality, not only in law

"The strength of a society is not in its laws, but in the morality of its people." Law without **internalised honesty** is a **police-statute graveyard**. India has many Acts and still **leaks**. **Vivekananda** wanted **character** as nation-building. The civil servant's job is **both**: write a good rule **and** model it. If the officer takes a Diwali gift that is a bribe, the **law is a joke** in

that office. If citizens will not queue without a tout, **no portal** will save them. **Durkheim** would call this the **collective conscience**. **Vivekananda** calls it **man-making**.

- **The three quotes in one life: calm in the crisis, a chosen professional attitude, and a people who do not need a camera to be honest.**

Flow diagram

Thiruvalluvar: calm -> Civil servant

James: attitude -> Civil servant

Vivekananda: public morality -> Civil servant

Conclusion

Thiruvalluvar praises calm competence in crisis. James praises a chosen attitude that changes conduct. **Vivekananda** reminds us that statutes fail if people and officers are not moral. A civil servant needs all three.

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Q4 · 10 marks

(a) "For any kind of social re-engineering by successfully implementing welfare schemes, a civil servant must use reason and critical thinking in an ethical framework." Justify this statement with suitable examples. (b) What are the major teachings of Mahavir? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world.

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics and Human Interface

Revision summary

Social re-engineering through welfare needs hard thinking about targeting and exclusion, inside a frame of dignity.

Portal worship without a humane override can starve a rights-holder.

Mahavira taught ahimsa, satya, aparigraha and anekantavada - non-violence, truth, non-possessiveness and many-sidedness.

Those ideas check hate speech, corruption, ecological harm and one-sided files.

Examples from PDS, MGNREGA and forest housing show the mix of reason and ethics.

Introduction

A welfare scheme can **starve the right household** with a wrong list, or **humiliate** the right household with a wrong tone. Part (a) says the officer must **think** inside an **ethical frame**. Part (b) asks what **Mahavira** still teaches a noisy republic.

Body

(a) Reason and critical thinking in an ethical frame

Reason is: Does this DBT reach the widow? Is the Aadhaar failure an exclusion error? Is the quarry a false work? Ethics is: Do not treat the beneficiary as a thief by default; do not leak her data; do not take a cut from the contractor. Critical thinking is: a dashboard can lie; a field visit is a moral act.

- **Examples.** PDS **after NFSA**: biometric failure that turns a hungry person away is a **rights failure**, not a tech glitch. An officer who only "follows the portal" without a **manual override with record** has abandoned both reason and compassion. **MGNREGA**: a fake muster is a crime; delaying a genuine wage is also a **justice failure**. **Housing**: clearing a forest without **FRA** to show a "makan" target is **unethical social engineering**. **Scholarship**: a caste certificate mill is fraud; a **harassing** verification of a Dalit student is another wrong.

- **Kant**: treat persons as **ends**. **Rawls**: **design the scheme as if you might be the least advantaged**. The Gita's nishkama is not laziness; it is **not farming a photo** as the fruit.

(b) Teachings of Mahavira and today

Ahimsa is non-violence of **act, word and even intent**. **Today: communal speech, custodial cruelty, and ecological violence**. **Satya** is truth: **an honest FIR, an honest EIA**. **Aparigraha** is non-possessiveness: **against corruption and consumer greed**. **Anekantavada** is many-sidedness of truth: the administrative gold against **echo chambers** and against a file that sees only the ministry's side. **Syadvada** (conditional predication) trains **intellectual humility**. **Brahmacharya** in a public sense is **self-restraint**.

- **Relevance:** a polarised feed needs anekantavada; a climate crisis needs ahimsa toward the **future person**; a scam needs aparigraha. Jain thought is not only a diet. It is a **discipline of harm-reduction and many-sided seeing** - exactly what a district in conflict requires.

Flow diagram

Reason and field truth -> Welfare

Dignity Kant Rawls -> Welfare

Mahavira: ahimsa anekanta -> Reason and field truth

Conclusion

Welfare without critical, ethical reason becomes either leak or cruelty. Mahavira's non-violence, truth, non-greed and many-sided truth still train that reason for a civil servant.

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Q5 · 10 marks

(a) "One who is devoted to one's duty attains highest perfection in life." Analyse this statement with reference to sense of responsibility and personal fulfilment as a civil servant. (b) To achieve holistic development goal, a civil servant acts as an enabler and active facilitator of growth rather than a regulator. What specific measures will you suggest to achieve this goal?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics and Human Interface

Revision summary

Devotion to lawful duty, owned outcomes and competence together make a civil servant's 'perfection'.

Fulfilment is public trust, not a bribe or a trend.

Blind obedience to an illegal order is not duty.

As an enabler the officer uses single windows, SLAs, risk-based inspection and open data.

The officer still forbids harm; facilitation must not become capture for a nephew or a donor.

Introduction

The Gita says **dedicated work** leads toward **perfection**. A civil servant's 'perfection' is not a miracle. It is **a file that is complete, a queue that is fair, a night that was spent on a flood**. Part (b) then asks the same person to be an **enabler of growth**, not only a **stamp of no**.

Body

(a) Devotion to duty, responsibility, fulfilment

Duty (dharma of role) for an All-India officer is the **Constitution and the law**, not a family business. **Responsibility** is **ownership of outcome**: a collapsed bridge is not "the contractor's karma" if the quality check was yours. **Fulfilment** is the **eudaimonia** of a job well done - **Aristotle's** flourishing - which in public life is **trust earned**, not a viral reel.

- **Kant's** duty for duty's sake **matches nishkama karma**: do the right allocation **even if** the MLA is angry. The quote is abused if it means **blind obedience** to an illegal order (the Nuremberg lesson). Highest perfection in this service is **conscience plus competence**. A devoted officer who cannot read a balance sheet is a pious danger. A clever officer without devotion is a **clever leak**.

Personal fulfilment that needs a **bribe or a transfer-on-demand** is not the Gita's perfection. It is **artha without dharma**.

(b) Enabler and facilitator, with measures

Holistic development is **income, health, ecology, voice**. An enabler **clears a lawful plant in time, explains a standard, sits with an FPO, uses Jan Samvad**. **Specific measures: time-bound single-window** with published SLAs; **pre-consult** so EIA is not a surprise ambush; **risk-based inspection** instead of inspector raj; **open data** of licences; **grievance** with a named officer; **public-private** where the contract is **transparent**; **self-certification** with **heavy penalty for lying**; **district development coordination** that includes panchayats.

- **The red line:** enabling is not **regulatory capture**. A facilitator who writes a **tailored exemption** for a nephew is a **corrupt enabler**. The State remains a **regulator of harm** (pollution, fraud, labour). The shift is from **discretion as a throne** to **discretion as a service**.
- **Kautilya** wanted the king's officers to be watched. **So should we:** enable, and **audit the enabler**.

Flow diagram

Duty Gita Kant -> Fulfilment
Enabler SLAs window -> Growth
Regulator of harm -> Growth
Enabler SLAs window -> Not capture

Conclusion

Duty done with responsibility gives a civil servant a rightful fulfilment. Growth needs that officer as a time-bound facilitator with open rules, not as a gate who sells yes and hides no.

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Q6 · 10 marks

(a) It is said that for an ethical work culture, there must be code of ethics in place in every organisation. To ensure value-based and compliance-based work culture, what suitable measures would you adopt in your work place? (b) India is an emerging economic power of the world as it has recently secured the status of fourth largest economy of the world as per IMF projection. However, it has been observed that in some sectors, allocated funds remain either under-utilised or misutilised. What specific measures would you recommend for ensuring accountability in this regard to stop leakages and gaining the status of third largest economy of the world in near future?

GS IV · 2025 · Probity in Governance

Revision summary

A code of ethics states values; a code of conduct states forbidden acts; both need leaders who obey them.

Whistle protection, rotation, checked assets and small consistent punishments build culture.

India's fourth-largest-economy rank (IMF) sits beside under-used and stolen public money in some schemes.

PFMS, outcome budgets, social audit, GeM and CAG follow-up are the accountability kit.

Growth to third place is ethical only if the ladder is not stolen from the poor.

Introduction

A **code of ethics** says **what we believe**. A **code of conduct** says **what we may not do on Tuesday**. Part (a) wants both, alive in an office, not framed for a VIP. Part (b) notes IMF's line that India is the **fourth-largest economy** in the world and still **loses public money** in some sectors. Size without **probity** is a hollow rank.

Body

(a) Measures for an ethical work culture

Write a short code of ethics: integrity, objectivity, empathy, constitutional morality. Write a conduct code: gifts, conflict of interest, social media, sexual harassment. Induction that uses **case discussion**, not only a PPT. **Leaders eat last**: if the head takes a private jet for a family wedding on an official booking, the code is dead. **Speak-up**: a protected whistle channel to CVO. **No revenge posting**. **Rotate** sensitive desks. **Asset declarations** that are **checked**. **Celebrate** the clerk who refused a tout. **Punish** the first small leak; culture is a **thousand Tuesdays**.

Value-based culture is **Socrates in the canteen**. Compliance culture is **the audit trail**. India needs **both**. **Second ARC** and the **Nolan principles** (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership) are ready furniture.

(b) Accountability so the fourth can become a third without theft

IMF's **2025-class projection** of India as the **fourth-largest economy** (nominal dollars) is a **headline of scale**. Under-used and misused funds are a **headline of waste**: stalled irrigation, empty food parks, **ghost MGNREGA**, **delayed health buildings**. **Measures: just-in-time** releases (PFMS) so money does not rot in a park account; **outcome budgets** that a legislature can read; **social audit** that is not captured by the same sarpanch; **geotagged** assets; **CAG and PAC** with **time-bound ATR**; **benami and procurement** e-markets (GeM) with **blacklisting that bites**; **CWC/CVC** on big tickets; **Parliamentary** and **media** sunlight; **capacity** so a district can **spend well**, not only **surrender** in March.

Probity is **Kautilya's watchmen**. **Gandhi's talisman** - the face of the poorest - is the test of a leaked scholarship. Becoming **third** by **honest productivity** is ethics. Becoming third by **inflated invoices** is a **statistical sin**.

The civil servant's specific honour is to **stop the leakage without stopping the school**.

Flow diagram

Code of ethics -> Culture
Code of conduct -> Culture
PFMS social audit GeM -> Accountability
Accountability -> Honest third-largest path

Conclusion

An ethical office needs a living code, a speaking leader and a safe whistle. A fourth-largest economy still leaking funds will not become a fair third without PFMS, audits, geotags and punishment that is real.

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Q7 · 20 marks

Case study. Vijay was Deputy Commissioner of remote district of Hilly Northern State of the country for the last two years. In the month of August heavy rains lashed the complete state followed by cloud burst in the upper reaches of the said district. The damage was very heavy in the complete state especially in the affected district. The complete road network and telecommunication were disrupted and the buildings were damaged extensively. People's houses have been destroyed and they were forced to stay in open. More than 200 people have been killed and about 5000 were badly injured. The Civil Administration under Vijay got activated and started conducting rescue and relief operations. Temporary shelter camps and hospitals were established to provide shelter and medical facilities to the homeless and injured people. Helicopter services were pressed in, for evacuating sick and old people from remote areas. Vijay got a message from his hometown in Kerala that his mother was seriously sick. After two days Vijay received the unfortunate message that his mother has expired. Vijay has no close relative except one elder sister who was US citizen and staying there for last several years. In the meantime, the situation in the affected district deteriorated further due to resumption of heavy rains after a gap of five days. At the same time, continuous messages were coming on his mobile from his hometown to reach at the earliest for performing last rites of his mother. (a) What are the options available with Vijay?(b) What are the ethical dilemma being faced by Vijay?(c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Vijay.(d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics Case Studies

Revision summary

Vijay's options are to leave at once, stay then go, stay through the peak, attempt a short hop, or freeze.

The dilemma is filial duty versus the unique public role of a Deputy Commissioner in a still-killing disaster.

Leaving at once risks command failure; using a relief helicopter for a funeral would be wrong.

The best path is to stay through the life-saving window, delegate rites with the sister and a priest, and travel at the first true lull.

Grief is not denied; it is sequenced after the right to life of those still in the open.

Introduction

Vijay is the **Deputy Commissioner** of a hill district that a cloudburst has broken. Roads and phones are down. More than two hundred people are dead and thousands are hurt. His **mother in Kerala has died**, and the family asks him to come for the **last rites**. He has **no other close relative in India**. **This is not a trick. It is the oldest civil-service wound: the State's hour and the mother's hour** falling on the same night.

Body

(a) Options available to Vijay

First, he can **leave at once** for Kerala, handing the district to the Additional District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, and hope the helicopter and camps run without him. **Second**, he can **stay until the acute phase eases** - roads partly open, the next rain pulse handled - and then go for rites, asking his sister to delay ceremonies if faith and law allow, or to perform them with a priest on video as many families did in the pandemic. **Third**, he can **stay through the whole relief peak** and accept that he may **miss the funeral**, requesting a cousin, a trusted neighbour, or the sister on a later flight to complete rituals, and performing his own **shraddha** when the district can spare him. **Fourth**, he can try a **very short absence** of a day if a special flight exists and if the Chief Secretary formally places a full charge, which in a cut-off hill district is often a fantasy. **Fifth**, he can **collapse** into indecision, which is also a choice, and a bad one.

(b) Ethical dilemmas

The dilemmas are **filial piety versus public trusteeship; unique positional duty** (only one DC is the crisis coordinator) versus **replaceable son** (rites can be done by kin and priest); **personal grief versus the grief of five thousand injured; religious time** (last rites soon) versus **hydrological time** (the next cloudburst). There is also **integrity of emotion**: pretending he does not hurt is false; **abandoning the camps to prove he is a good son** may be another falsehood. **Confucius** honoured the parent; the Constitution honours the **right to life** of the living who still need a boat. Both claims are real. That is why it is a dilemma, not a slogan.

(c) Critical evaluation of the options

Leaving at once **honours the mother** and may **save Vijay from a lifetime of guilt**. It **risks command failure** in a theatre where the DC's name is the State. In a remote district, the ADM may be junior; helicopters need a **single political-administrative face**. The public will not parse his grief; they will see an empty chair.

Staying forever without any rite **can look heroic** and can **break a person**, and Hindu (or any) custom is not a toy. A **middle path** - stay while the rain is killing, delegate rites with a recorded blessing, go as soon as a named officer holds the night - **respects both** if it is honest, not a slow escape.

A one-day hop is **ethically pretty** and **logistically cruel** if it means a helicopter taken off a medical run. Using relief aviation for a funeral would be **a scandal of means**.

(d) Most appropriate option

The most appropriate course is **to remain in the district through the life-saving window, formally vest operational charge in the next competent officer for defined hours, ask**

the sister and a priest to perform the rites with Vijay present on a satellite call if a link exists, and travel to Kerala at the first genuine lull, with the Chief Secretary informed so that the State owns the choice. This is **Gandhi's talisman** (the face of the injured in the camp) plus **honour to the parent** delayed, not denied. It is **role morality**: the DC is not an ordinary son while the district is an open wound. When the wound closes, he must **go home and weep**. An officer who never weeps is not stronger. An officer who leaves a drowning block to prove a ritual clock is not more moral. He is **absent**.

Flow diagram

M Mother's rites -> Dilemma
Cloudburst district -> Dilemma
Dilemma -> Stay for life-saving window
Stay for life-saving window -> Go at first lull

Conclusion

Vijay should hold the district while people are still being pulled from the slope, share the rites at a distance if he must, and go to Kerala as soon as a real lull and a named deputy exist. Duty to the living poor and honour to his mother can both be told in that order, not as a cancellation of either.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2025/case-study-vijay-was-deputy-commissioner-of-remote-district-of-hilly-northern-state-of-the-country-for-the-last-two-years-in-the-month-of-august/>

Q8 · 20 marks

Case study. In line with the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the government has a constitutional obligation to ensure basic needs - "Roti, Kapda aur Makan (Food, Clothes and Shelter)" - for the under-privileged. Pursuing this mandate, the district administration proposed clearing a portion of forest land to develop housing for the homeless and economically weaker sections of the society. The proposed land, however, is an ecologically sensitive zone densely populated with age-old trees, medicinal plants and vital biodiversity. Besides, these forests help to regulate micro-climate and rainfalls; provide habitat for wildlife, support soil fertility and prevent land/soil erosion and sustain livelihoods of tribal and nomadic communities. In spite of the ecological and social costs, the administration argues in favour of the said proposal by highlighting that this very initiative would provide housing to human rights as a critical welfare priority. Besides it, it fulfils the government's duty to uplift and empower the poor through inclusive housing development. Further, these forest areas have become unsafe due to wild-animal threats and recurring human-wild life conflicts. Lastly, clearing forest-zones may help to curb anti-social elements allegedly using these areas as hideouts, thereby enhancing law and order. (a) Can deforestation be ethically justified in the pursuit of social welfare objectives like, housing for the homeless? (b) What are the socio-economic, administrative and ethical challenges in balancing environmental conservation with human development? (c) What substantial alternatives or policy interventions can be proposed to ensure that both environmental integrity and human dignity are protected?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics Case Studies

Revision summary

DPSPs demand both housing for the weak and protection of the environment.

Clearing a biodiverse forest can unhause tribals while housing someone else.

The ethical first search is vacant plots, infill and degraded land, with FRA consent if forest is touched at all.

A photo colony in a core habitat fails public-trust and land-ethic tests.

The poor who live from the forest count as the poor, not as an obstacle.

Introduction

The Constitution asks the State to care about **roti, kapda and makan**. A district wants to **cut a living forest** to house the homeless. The same forest **holds rain, tribes, medicine and soil**. This is not 'trees versus poor people'. It is **which poor, which land, and whether the State did the easier violence**.

Body

(a) Can deforestation be ethically justified for housing?

Not as a first resort, and not in this dense old patch. Shelter is a real duty (**Article 21** with DPSPs on livelihood). A living forest that holds rain, tribes and soil is also a duty (**Article 48A**, public trust, FRA). Ethics of **lesser harm** can justify **some** tree loss on **already degraded** land after an honest search. It cannot justify **the easiest green core** so that a colony photograph is ready this financial year. If the only story is "the poor cannot eat biodiversity", the speaker has **erased the poor who already eat from that forest. So: no ethical blank cheque** for this proposal; **a narrow maybe** only after brown-land failure is proved in public.

(b) Socio-economic, administrative and ethical challenges

Socio-economic: urban homeless need **makan**; forest users need **produce and identity**; a cleared slope can **dry a town** and **raise future disaster costs**. **Administrative:** EIA theatre, **forged gram sabhas, target-driven** housing missions, weak **land records**, and a contractor who arrives before the botanist. **Ethical: which poor; consent versus consultation; present voters versus unborn; means** (a grove as a shortcut) versus **ends** (dignity). Leopold's land ethic and **Gandhi's** talisman collide unless the officer **counts the tribal face as the poorest face too**.

(c) Substantial alternatives

Publish a vacant-land audit of government plots, infill, unused staff colonies and rental housing. **Build vertical** on brownfield. **Repair existing public buildings first. If forest is touched at all: edge only, gram sabha consent, no-go core, real compensatory ecology** (not distant eucalyptus), and **livelihood shares** for displaced users. **PMAY** and **rental** policy should **precede** a chainsaw. That package protects **environmental integrity and human dignity** together.

A civil servant who only quotes **makan** has forgotten that the grove is also **kapda** - shade - for the people who already live there.

Flow diagram

Homeless makan -> Choice
 Forest tribe rain -> Choice
 Choice -> Degraded land infill
 Choice -> Do not cut core

Conclusion

Shelter is a constitutional care. A dense old forest is not the first place to keep that promise. Audit degraded land, get consent, and do not manufacture a new displaced tribe in the name of housing.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2025/case-study-in-line-with-the-directive-principles-of-state-policy-enshrined-in-the-indian-constitution-the-government-has-a-constitutional-ob/>

WRAP Exams

Q9 · 20 marks

Case study. Subash is Secretary, PWD in the State Government. He is a senior officer, known for his competence, integrity and dedication to work. He enjoys the trust and confidence of Minister Incharge of PWD and Programme Implementation. As a part of his job profile, he is responsible for policy formulation, execution of projects relating to infrastructure initiatives in the State. Besides, he oversees the technical and administrative aspects relating to planning, designing and construction etc. Subash's Minister is an important Minister in the state and significant growth in urban infrastructure development and road network has been registered during his tenure. He is very keen for launching of ambitious road construction project in the near future. Subash is in regular touch with the Minister and is working various modalities of road construction project. Regular meetings, interactions and presentations are made by him to the Minister before a formal public announcement of the project is made by the Minister. Subash's only son Vikas is in real estate business. His son from his own sources is aware that a mega road project is on the anvil and announcement in this regard is expected anytime. He is very keen to know from his father the exact location of the upcoming project. He knows that there would be quantum jump in the prices of land at the proposed location. Buying land at this stage at cheaper prices would pay him rich dividends. He is pleading with him (his father) day in and day out to share him location of the proposed project. He assured him that he would handle the matter discreetly as it would not attract any adverse notice as he in the normal course, keeps on buying land as a part of his business. He feels pressurised because of constant pleadings by his son. Another significant aspect of the matter pertained to the extra/undue interest in the above project by the Minister PWD. His nephew was also having big infrastructure project company. In fact, the Minister has also introduced his nephew to him and indicated to him to take care of his nephew's business interest in the forthcoming project. The Minister encouraged him to act fast in the matter as early announcement and execution of mega road project would enhance his status in the party and public life. In the above backdrop, Subash is in a fix as to the future course of action. (a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case. (b)

Critically examine the options available to Subash in the above situation. (c) Which of the above would be most appropriate and why?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics Case Studies

Revision summary

The ethical issues are conflict of interest, insider land information and a minister's plea for a nephew.

Leaking the alignment would let the son steal a public price jump.

Favouring the nephew would be cronyism.

Subash should refuse both, warn his son, recuse from related tenders, and record the minister's request to the Chief Secretary.

Discretion that hides a family trade is not professionalism.

Introduction

Subash is a **trusted PWD Secretary**. His **son wants the secret alignment** of a coming road so that he can **buy land cheap**. The **Minister** wants **care** for a **nephew's infrastructure firm**. This is a textbook of **conflict of interest**, **insider information**, and **political pressure**. Competence without **probity** is how a good officer becomes a **family broker**.

Body

(a) Ethical issues

- **Conflict of interest:** Subash's private family wealth is tied to a public secret. **Misuse of official information** (a Conduct Rules and, at the extreme, a criminal line) if he speaks the alignment. **Fairness:** other citizens cannot buy that land. **Independence:** the Minister's nephew is a **second conflict - crony access**. **Integrity versus loyalty:** loyalty to a minister is **constitutional**, not **personal**. **Emotional pressure** from a son is still **not a defence**. **Appearance of bias** even if he later "does it discreetly" - justice must be **seen**.

(b) Options

He can **leak to the son** and **favour the nephew**. He can leak to the son and **resist the nephew**. He can **tell neither** and **record** the minister's request in a confidential file to the Chief Secretary. He can **recuse** from the alignment decision and from tender committees. He can **ask for a transfer**. He can **warn the son in writing** that any bid using inside knowledge will be **reported**. He can **become a whistle** if a tender is already being **tailored**.

(c) Most appropriate

- **The right bundle is: do not share the location with the son; tell the son, once, firmly, that the request is unethical and possibly illegal; treat the nephew as any other bidder** under **transparency of DPR and tender**; **reduce to writing** the minister's "take care" remark and **seek written orders** if the minister insists on a name; **recuse** from evaluation if the nephew bids; **inform the Chief Secretary** so the State, not Subash's memory, holds the risk. If the minister **punishes** him, that is the **cost of integrity**, which **Vivekananda** would still call **strength**.

Kautilya listed **temptations of office**. The son's plea is the **softest and worst**, because love launders a crime. The most appropriate option is **silence on the map, sunlight on the tender, and a file that can go to a court**.

Flow diagram

Son wants map -> No insider
Nephew firm -> Equal tender
Minister pressure -> Note to CS

Conclusion

Subash must not feed his son the alignment and must not tailor the project for the minister's nephew. He should recuse where family or the nephew appears, record pressure, and keep the tender open. Love and loyalty are not licences to loot a road.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2025/case-study-subash-is-secretary-pw-d-in-the-state-government-he-is-a-senior-officer-known-for-his-competence-integrity-and-dedication-to-work/>

Q10 · 20 marks

Case study. Rajesh is a Group A officer with nine years of service. He is posted as Administrative Officer in an Oil Public Sector undertaking. As an Administrative Officer he is responsible for managing and coordinating various administrative tasks to ensure smooth functioning of office. He also manages office supplies, equipment etc. Rajesh is now sufficient senior and is expecting his next promotion in JAG (Junior Administrative Grade) in the next one or two years. He knows that promotion is based on examination of ACRs/Performance Appraisal of last few years (5 years or so) of an officer by a DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) and an officer lacking requisite grading of ACRs may not be found fit for promotion. Consequences of losing promotion may entail financial and reputational loss and set-back for career progression. Though he also puts his best efforts in official discharge of his duties, yet he is unsure of assessment by his superior officer. He is now putting extra efforts so that he gets thumping report at the end of financial year. As Administrative Officer, Rajesh is regularly interacting with his immediate boss, who is his reporting officer for writing his ACR. One day he calls Rajesh and wants him to buy computer-related stationery on priority from a particular vendor. Rajesh instructs his office to initiate action for procuring these items. During the day, the dealing Assistant brings an estimate of Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs covering all stationery items from the same vendor. It is noticed that as per delegated financial powers, as provided in the GFR (General Financial Rules) as applicable in that Organisation, expenditure for office items exceeding Rupees Thirty Lakhs requires sanction of the next higher authority (boss in the present case). Rajesh knows that immediate superior would expect all these purchases should be done at his level and may not appreciate such lack of initiative on his part. During discussions with office, he learns that common practice of splitting of expenditure (where large order is divided into a series of smaller ones) is followed to avoid obtaining sanction from higher authority. This practice is against the rules and may come to the adverse notice of Audit. Rajesh is perturbed. He is unsure of taking decision in the matter. (a) What are the options available with Rajesh in the above situation?(b) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?(c) Which would be the most

appropriate option for Rajesh and why?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics Case Studies

Revision summary

Splitting ₹35 lakh into smaller bills to avoid the boss's sanction is a GFR violation, even if it is a common trick.

The ethical issues are career fear, a named vendor, and the habit of collective cheating.

Rajesh's options include splitting, lawful phasing, written illegal orders, or a proper sanction.

The right choice is a single proposal to the competent authority and a competitive purchase.

A promotion that needs a false indent is not worth the integrity it costs.

Introduction

Rajesh can **sign a ₹35 lakh stationery order** only if he **breaks it into pieces** under ₹30 lakh, which **GFR forbids as splitting to dodge sanction**. His **boss**, who writes his **ACR**, wants speed and that **vendor**. Promotion sits in the next room. This is how **honest men become audit paragraphs**: not with a suitcase, with a **shortcut for a grade**.

Body

(a) Options

Rajesh can **split the bill** as "office practice" and sleep badly. He can **send the full proposal to the boss for sanction**, which is what GFR wants, and **explain the delay**. He can **ask for a smaller urgent lot** within his power and a **second indent** later for the rest **if the need is genuinely phased**, which is **not** the same as fake splitting of one need. He can **seek written orders** from the boss to split, which **transfers the sin** but still may not save him in audit. He can **recuse** and ask another officer to process. He can **quietly refuse the named vendor** and go to **GeM** for a competitive buy at the lawful level.

(b) Ethical issues

Probity and rule of law versus **careerism**. **Integrity** versus **loyalty to a reporting officer**. **Objectivity** in vendor choice (a named seller is a **red flag**). **Courage** (**Second ARC's** value) versus **fear of a bad ACR**. **Collective wrong**: "everyone splits" is the **banality of office evil**. **Stewardship of public money**. **Kant**: if every AO splits, GFR is a dead letter.

(c) Most appropriate

The most appropriate path is to **refuse the split, put up a single proposal of ₹35 lakh to the competent authority (the boss) the same day, state that GFR bars splitting, move the indent on GeM or a competitive process unless a documented emergency exists, and note the conversation** in a contemporaneous file. If the boss **lowers the ACR**, Rajesh still has a **defensible honour**; a promotion bought by an audit objection is a **promotion with a fuse**. If the boss **sanctions in writing**, the purchase can proceed **lawfully**. If the boss **insists on a split in writing**, Rajesh should **not obey an illegal direction** and should **escalate to the next authority or CVO**.

- **Gandhi**: means are everything. A clean ACR is a **fruit**. A split indent is a **rotten means**.

Flow diagram

GFR no split no split -> Rajesh
ACR fear fear -> Rajesh
Rajesh -> Put up 35 lakh for sanction
Rajesh -> No fake split

Conclusion

Rajesh should not split the purchase to please his reporting officer. He should send the full case up for sanction, buy competitively, and accept that a fair ACR is better than a promotion sitting on an audit objection.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2025/case-study-rajesh-is-a-group-a-officer-with-nine-years-of-service-he-is-posted-as-administrative-officer-in-an-oil-public-sector-undertaking/>

Q11 · 20 marks

Case study. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, MGNREGA was earlier known as National Rural Employment Scheme, NREGA. It is an Indian Social Welfare Program that aimed at fulfilling the 'Right to Work' provisions made in the Constitution. MGNREGA was launched in 2006 under Rural Employment Sector by the Ministry of Rural Development. Main objective of the program is to give legal guarantee of wage employment to the adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour work subject to a maximum of 100 days per year for every household. Every rural household has the right to register under the scheme, job card is issued to the registered, Job Card holder can seek employment; State Government shall pay 25% of minimum wage for the first 30 days as compensatory daily unemployment allowance to the families and of wage for remaining period of the year. MGNREGA work was undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You have been appointed as an Administrator Incharge of the District. You have been given the responsibility of monitoring MGNREGA work undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You are also given the authority to give technical sanctions to all MGNREGA works. In one of the Panchayats in your jurisdiction, you notice that your predecessor has mismanaged the Program in terms of: (i) Money not disbursed to actual job-seekers.(ii) Muster Rolls of the Labourers not properly maintained.(iii) Mismatch between the work done and payments made.(iv) Payments made to fictitious persons.(v) Job Cards were given without looking into the need of person.(vi) Mismanagement of funds and to the extent of siphoning of funds.(vii) Approved works that never existed. (a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how do you restore the proper functioning of MGNREGA Program in this regard?(b) What actions would you initiate, to solve the various issues listed above?(c) How would you deal with the above situation?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics Case Studies

Revision summary

The first duty is to protect records, tell workers the truth, and stop further theft.

Arrears must reach real job-seekers while ghosts, fake works and siphoned funds go to vigilance and the police.

Job cards should be re-verified without stripping genuine households.

The predecessor deserves due process, not a media hanging or a cover-up.

Social audit, geotagging and a public dashboard keep the repair from rotting again.

Introduction

You take charge of a district and find that **MGNREGA**, a **right to work**, has been **turned into a trough**: money not paid to workers, **ghost names**, **fake works**, **job cards as favours**. Your **predecessor** built that trough. Your ethics are **justice for labour**, **due process for the accused**, and **restoration of a law that is the rural poor's floor**.

Body

(a) Reaction and restoration

The right reaction is **neither a press conference of rage nor a quiet burial**. It is **shock that becomes a plan**. Freeze **doubtful payments**, **protect records**, **inform the State rural-development secretary and the CVO/Vigilance**, **do not destroy the predecessor's laptop**, and **tell workers the truth in a jan sunwai: the scheme is yours by law**, this office **failed you**, we will **rebuild**. Restoration means **fresh job-card verification**, **DBT that actually hits Aadhaar-seeded accounts of living workers**, **works that exist on the ground** (geotag), and a **helpdesk** for those who were **never paid**.

(b) Actions on the listed issues

(i) Money not disbursed to job-seekers: trace PFMS, pay arrears with **priority**, fix the block officer. **(ii) Muster rolls**: reconstruct from attendance apps, photos, and village memory; **end paper ghosts**. **(iii) Mismatch of work and pay**: measurement books versus site; recover from **implementing agency**. **(iv) Fictitious persons**: **FIR**, Aadhaar de-duplication, **social audit**. **(v) Job cards without need**: re-verify households; a job card is a **right of a rural household willing to work**, not a **caste gift**, but it is also **not a trader's pad**. **(vi) Siphoning**: **criminal case**, attachment, **departmental inquiry**. **(vii) Non-existent works**: **site inspection**, **black-list**, **recovery**. Technical sanction from you now must be **earned by a visit**, not a signature culture.

(c) How to deal with the whole situation

Use **law**, **not vendetta**. The predecessor gets a **charge sheet and a chance to reply**. Staff who **cooperated** get a **path to turn approver**. Do **not** punish genuine workers for a **sarpanch's crime** by closing the panchayat's entire shelf. Bring **Ombudsperson**, **social audit unit**, and **geo-MGNREGA** to stay. Publish a **monthly dashboard**. Your **personal integrity is the message: this scheme is Gandhi's employment as right**, not a **MLA's cash**. **Aristotle's justice is giving each their due** - wages to the worker, punishment to the thief, and a **functioning office** to the village.

Flow diagram

Fraud list -> Freeze records
 Freeze records -> Pay real workers
 Freeze records -> Vigilance FIR
 Social audit geotag -> Restore right to work

Conclusion

Name the fraud, freeze the leak, pay the real worker, and prosecute with due process. Restore MGNREGA as a right, not as a revenge play against a predecessor and not as a silence that protects him.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2025/case-study-mahatma-gandhi-national-rural-employment-guarantee-program-mgnrega-was-earlier-known-as-national-rural-employment-scheme-nrega-it/>

WRAP Exams

Q12 · 20 marks

Case study. Ashok is Divisional Commissioner of one of the border districts of the North East State. A few years back, Military has taken over the neighbouring country after overthrowing the elected civil government. Civil war situation is prevailing in the country especially in last two years. However, internal situation further deteriorated due to rebel groups taking over control of certain populated areas near own border. Due to intense fight between military and rebel groups, civilian casualties has increased manifold in recent past. In the meantime, in one night Ashok got information from the local police guarding the border check post that there are about 200-250 people mainly women and children trying to cross over to our side of the border. There are also about 10 soldiers with their weapons in military uniform part of this group who wants to cross over. Women and Children are also crying and begging for help. A few of them are injured and bleeding profusely need immediate medical care. Ashok tried to contact Home Secretary of the State but failed to do so due to poor connectivity mainly due to inclement weather. (a) What are the options available with Ashok to cope with the situation?(b) What are the ethical and legal dilemmas being faced by Ashok?(c) Which of the options, do you think would be more appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?(d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the Border Guarding Police in dealing with soldiers in uniform?

GS IV · 2025 · Ethics Case Studies

Revision summary

Options range from pushing everyone back to opening the gate to armed men; both extremes fail.

The dilemma is non-refoulement and medical duty versus sovereignty and the risk of a ruse.

The better path is triage and shelter for civilians, especially women and children, and separate internment of disarmed soldiers pending the Centre.

Border police should keep distance, seal weapons, separate camps, and avoid humiliation or leaks.

Waiting for a dead phone while a child bleeds is not caution; it is omission.

Introduction

Ashok is **Divisional Commissioner** on a **North-East border**. A **civil war** next door has pushed **two hundred women and children**, some **bleeding**, and **ten armed soldiers** toward the check-post. The **Home Secretary's phone does not work**. Night, rain, and **international law** arrive together. This is **humanity, sovereignty, and force protection** in one queue.

Body

(a) Options

Ashok can **push everyone back** at gunpoint. He can **open the gate to all**, including **armed men**. He can **admit civilians, disarm and intern** the soldiers pending **MHA and MEA**. He can **give medical aid on the zero line** without a formal crossing. He can **wait for Delhi** while a child bleeds. He can **split**: women and children to a camp, soldiers to a **separate guarded enclosure**.

(b) Ethical and legal dilemmas

Non-refoulement (customary against return to torture or indiscriminate harm) versus **Foreigners Act** and a **closed border**. **IHL**: civilians versus **combatants**. **National security**: a uniform can be a **ruse**. **Duty of care** to the bleeding. **Sovereignty** of India and of the neighbour. **Chain of command**: acting without the Home Secretary versus **omission** as a death. **Equality**: a soldier is still a **human being** if disarmed; he is not a **tourist**. **Local politics** of the Northeast (load on a small district, ethnic rumours).

(c) Most appropriate

- **The most appropriate bundle is: immediate medical triage on Indian soil or at the post for the injured regardless of papers** (**Article 21** is not only for voters); **admit women, children and unarmed civilians to a temporary camp** with **registration, screening, and FRRO/MHA** in the morning; **do not let armed soldiers walk in as a unit; require weapons down, separate them, treat as detained foreign military personnel** until **Army/BSF/ITBP and MEA** instruct (possible **internment**, not a press hug); **record every step** for the Home Secretary when the weather eases. Pushing a bleeding child back is **inhuman**. Opening a night gate to **loaded rifles** is **reckless**. This is **prudence plus compassion**, Grotius and the Geneva distinction in a district raincoat.

(d) Extra precautions for border police with soldiers in uniform

Assume ruse until proven. **Cover and distance**. **Night illumination and body cameras** if they exist. **No crowding** of the post. **Women police** for women refugees. **Language** and **search by same gender**. **Separate lock-up from civilian camp**. **Count weapons into a sealed pit**. **No selfies, no leaked video** that becomes a diplomatic mine. **Medical before interrogation**. **Inform BSF/Army** at once. **Watch the rear** for a follow-on group. **Do not strip a prisoner as humiliation**. **Do not hand them to a local mob**.

Ashok's honour is the **child who lives** and the **post that does not fall**.

Flow diagram

Group at fence -> Civilians aid and camp
Group at fence -> Soldiers disarm separate
Soldiers disarm separate -> MHA MEA Army
Civilians aid and camp -> Article 21 triage

Conclusion

Help the injured and the civilian women and children; disarm and isolate the soldiers; write to Delhi as soon as the phone lives. A closed heart and an open armoury are both failures on that night.

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Compiled answer key

Last pages of this pack. Each question links to the WRAP model answer on wrapexams.com.

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Q1 10 marks	Q2 10 marks	Q3 10 marks	Q4 10 marks
Q5 10 marks	Q6 10 marks	Q7 20 marks	Q8 20 marks
Q9 20 marks	Q10 20 marks	Q11 20 marks	Q12 20 marks

Question-wise key

Q1 · 10 marks Solution

Q2 · 10 marks Solution

Q3 · 10 marks Solution

Q4 · 10 marks Solution

Q5 · 10 marks Solution

Q6 · 10 marks Solution

Q7 · 20 marks Solution

Q8 · 20 marks Solution

Q9 · 20 marks Solution

Q10 · 20 marks Solution

Q11 · 20 marks Solution

Q12 · 20 marks Solution

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