



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

SMART

Mains Current Affairs

Programme 2026

22 Questions Reflected in UPSC Mains 2025



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**Monika
Srivastava**

**A Catalyst
to
Top Ranks!**

Date of Commencement

1st July 2026

Mode: Offline / Online

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SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme 2026

Embark on an empowering journey to the top ranks of the UPSC Civil Services exam with our SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme. **Current affairs form an integral part of the UPSC syllabus.** With more than **60% of the questions** related to current events appearing in both the Preliminary and Main Examinations directly or indirectly. Therefore, staying updated about current events is essential to score well in these exams.

S.M.A.R.T. Mains Current Affairs Programme 2026 by Vajiram & Ravi is a comprehensive program that aims to provide aspirants with a **Simple yet Strategic, Multi-dimensional, Advanced and Adaptive, Resourceful, and Targeted** approach to their Current Affairs preparation.

One Expert is Never Enough for UPSC Current Affairs!
That's why we're giving you three.



Dr. Jayant Parikshit
(IIM Lucknow, DSE)

Macro analysis and
economic perspectives



Srivatsan
(Ex-IRS)

Insights from governance
and public service



Abhinav Srivastav
(IIT Roorkee)

Analytical and data-driven
approach

SMART

Current Affairs Programme 2025



50+ Selections

Features of the SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme

SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme has been meticulously curated to redefine UPSC CSE preparation for aspirants. Thoughtfully created, it has the following distinguishing features:

CLASSES

RESOURCES

MAINS READY



Classes

- **Comprehensive Coverage** of multiple reliable sources like The Hindu, Indian Express, Economic Times, PIB, etc. (including Economic Survey, Budget, Schemes and Indices)
- **Interlinkages** of Current Affairs with static concepts.
- **Understanding the Examiner's Mindset** to gauge the kind of questions that might appear in exam.

Resources

- **Handouts** to support learning, revision and active recall during the exam. No additional study material required.
- **Value Addition** through **comprehensive diagrams, dimensions, data points, examples, and case studies**—ready to use in your answers.

Mains Ready

Mains Answer-Writing and Answer-Generation Skills to seamlessly integrate current affairs into your arguments and elevate your Mains score.

Dynamic Assessment & Feedback

- **Live Answer writing:** Engage in regular answer writing practice in each class to learn the art of writing high quality arguments and examples directly from the Faculties of the program.
- **Holistic Preparation:** Our program combines the structured rigor of learning with the flexibility of an adaptive environment, ensuring comprehensive preparation and equipping you to face the challenges of the exam with confidence.

Course Details

- Course Start time: **1st July 2026**
- Classes will be conducted **~3 times a week**
- Class/video duration will be **2.5-3 hours**
- Class Handouts and **Value Addition material** for high scoring.
- **Includes regular Live in-class Answer Writing sessions** to track progress for exam readiness.

Note

- **Course Fee: 10,000/-** (without current affairs test series)

Why choose SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme?

As a renowned coaching institute for UPSC CSE, Vajiram & Ravi recognises that despite a solid understanding of the static syllabus, aspirants often face challenges in effectively correlating and applying Current Affairs in the Mains Examination.

The programme is designed to help aspirants understand how a current issue may be framed as a UPSC question and how it can be effectively incorporated into answers.



Mains Reflections

22 Direct Questions

Reflected from Vajiram and Ravi SMART Current Affairs in Mains 2025

GS3 - Q9. Terrorism is a global scourge. How has it manifested in India? Elaborate with contemporary examples. What are the counter measures adopted by the State? Explain.

Counter Terrorism & Operation Sindoor

Recent Context	Messaging & Goal From revenge narrative → to global strategic signalling & pre-emptive deterrence
Trigger → Pulwama Attack (Feb 14, 2019) Pakistan-backed (LTF/JeM) cross-border terror strike in J&K → high-profile → public outrage → pressure on India's defence.	Ownership & Capability from imported systems → to indigenous (Vishak, Nigahat, etc.) + joint tri-service ops.
Response → Operation Sindoor (May 7-10) air strikes on terror camps using drones, Isarung missiles, satellites, Indian Air Force → no ground troops, no civilian harm → new doctrine: tech-led, external, surgical retaliation.	Strategic Goals of Op. Sindoor
The Strategic Shift in India's Approach	1. Military Objective → Destroy terror infrastructure, precision strikes, zero-casualty warfare, zero casualties, deep strikes from Indian airspace (lessen the cost of terror)
Doctrinal Shift → Internalisation vs Externalisation	2. Psychological Objective → Break nuclear shield assumption, restore deterrence, shatter Pakistan overconfidence, target weaker military when (post retaliation)
Old Approach → Internalisation Focused on counter-insurgency within Kashmir using ground forces, covert ops, and arrests.	3. Political Objective → Show strong leadership, assert national security doctrine, responsible escalation control, hybrid deterrence via economic pressure (SWIFT)
New Approach → Externalisation Targets terror roots in DUK and maintain using drones, airstrikes, satellites → visible, tech-led, deterrence-oriented.	4. Narrative & Diplomatic Objective → Global pre-briefing, media control, vetoes moral high ground, isolate Pakistan diplomatically
Key Examples → Evolution Path: 2016 Surgical Strikes (LTF), 2019 Balakot (Pulwama), 2025 Sindoor (Pulwama) → rising precision, deeper targeting.	Key characteristics of Op. Sindoor
Strategic Shift → Sindoor vs Earlier Ops	Nuclear Deterrence Doctrine Shift → Pakistan's nuclear shield challenged, Stability-Instability Paradox breaks, counterforce strikes under nuclear umbrella demonstrated, deterrence now includes limited conventional retaliation
Force & Mode From Army-ground ops → to IAF-led zero-casualty airstrikes.	Full-Spectrum Deterrence → Multi-domain capability across air, land, sea, cyber, space, information, nuclear posture maintained but not relied on, escalation control + strategic messaging integrated
Tech & Tools From manual only → to AI, drones, UAV, precision, FSD.	

GS3 - Q10. The Government of India recently stated that Left Wing Extremism (LWE) will be eliminated by 2026. What do you understand by LWE and how are the people affected by it? What measures have been taken by the government to eliminate LWE?

LWE - Achievements and Assessment

Achievements	Revised Strategy
Geographic Shrinkage → Red Corridor Broken LWE-affected districts down from 126 (2019) → 42 (2023) "Hot Affected" districts reduced: 12 → 6 (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra) Mount intelligence area: 18,000 sq. km → 4,200 sq. km Inference : Corridor now split into isolated pockets → no mass mobilisation	Security Dimension
Violence Plummeted → Lowest in Decades Civilian - 1800, Forces - 770, Infra attacks: 365 → 25 Casualties <100 for first time in 30 yrs (2023) Inference : State now dominating the battlefield	Strategic Vision → Total Elimination, Not Management Now: Mission declared as India's gravest internal threat with a clear goal of elimination by March 31, 2026 Earlier: Viewed as a socio-economic issue; goal was containment, not elimination
Top Leadership Uplift Out → Psychological Blow Bhaskar Singh (Naxal) killed (May 2023) → first time in 30 yrs Other key leaders: Sudhakar, Bhaskar, Uday → all neutralised Total 186 Maoists killed in 18 months Inference : Leadership vacuum, internal demoralisation	Political Uplift → Mission-Mode National Leadership Now: Centralised, resolute leadership, sustained political momentum Earlier: Inconsistent, Centre-State approach; weak follow-through and diluted focus
Organisational Collapse → Cadre & Command Eroded Pushkara: 12 → 3 members Cadres in Gadchiroli: 28 left, confined to 2 talukas Annual Maoists: 1,000 → 3,000 (last 2 years) Inference : Hollowed out chain of command, supply collapse	Leadership Targeting → Decapitation as Core Doctrine Now: Systematic targeting of top Maoist leadership (e.g., Bhaskar Singh, Gadchiroli) Earlier: Lacked prioritised targeting; leadership structure remained intact for decades
State Reclaims Red Zones → Development + Domination Schools, BSNL, housing, 100% mobile coverage, schools, PNCs Agricultural breached, camps established Safe corridors built: Bhaskar, Gadchiroli, Lokhar now under watch Inference : "Single District" replaced by "District of India"	Security Infrastructure → Fortified, Penetrative Grid Now: 612 fortified police stations by 2026, 280+ new camps, helipads for deep-area access Earlier: Sparse camps, weak forward deployment, security vacuum in Red Corridor interiors
Mass Surrenders & Rehabilitation → Break from Violence 1,000+ surrenders since 2019	Force Deployment → Elite Forces + Tribal Integration Now: CRIF, CRPF, and local force + fighters dominate counter-insurgency Earlier: Centre's CRPF deployments with little specialisation or follow-up/repatriation
Local Disarmament → Community-Based Policing Now: 100% BPL → 100% BPL	

22 Direct Questions

Reflected from Vajiram and Ravi SMART Current Affairs in Mains 2025

GS2 - Q2. Comment on the need of administrative tribunals as compared to the court system. Assess the impact of the recent tribunal reforms through rationalization of tribunals made in 2021.

Lok Adalat	Administrative tribunals
- One of the alternative dispute redressal mechanisms. - NALSA, along with other Legal Services Institutions, conducts Lok Adalats. - Forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at the pre-litigation stage are settled/compromised	Administrative tribunals are constituted with the 42nd Constitutional Amendment to Articles 323A and 323B of the Indian Constitution. However, the Administrative Tribunal is a substitute to the High Court. These tribunals are quasi-judicial in nature but are assigned to adjudicate the matters referred before them. It is a sign of a welfare state. As many tribunals are working today, a regulatory mechanism is very much needed.
1. Art - 323A: Civil Service disputes a. e.g. Central Administrative Tribunal 2. Art - 323B: Other Tribunals a. e.g. Income Tax Tribunal, NCLT, SEBI Tribunal, NCLAT, IDRA, etc.	Waqf Amendment Act - 2025 - Clearly define "waqf" as waqf by any person practicing Islam for at least five years and having ownership of such property. - Ensuring that the creation of waqf-al-ahid does not lead to the denial of inheritance rights to women. - Providing the functions of the Survey Commissioner to the Collector or any other officer not below the rank of Deputy Collector, duly nominated by the Collector - Providing for a broad-based composition of the Central Waqf Council and the State Waqf Boards and entering the representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims. - Providing for the establishment of a separate Board of Waqf for Boharas and Agha Khans. - Providing for the representation of Shia, Sunni, Bohra, Agha Khan, and other backward classes among Muslim.

GS2 - Q14 - Examine the evolving pattern of Centre-State financial relations in the context of planned development in India. How far have the recent reforms impacted the fiscal federalism in India?

Fiscal Federalism	ROYALTY IS NOT A TAX
Fiscal federalism - U/A - 26B: Duties levied by the Union but collected & appropriated by States, e.g. Stamp duties & duties of excise on medicinal & toilet preparations mentioned in the Union list. - Article 268A: Service Tax added by 82nd CAA - 2003 & repealed by 101st CAA - 2016. - U/A - 26A: Taxes levied & collected by Union but assigned to the States, e.g. Taxes on sales or purchase of Goods in course of inter-state trade or commerce, Terminal Taxes on Goods or Passengers carried by Rail, Road, Air or Ships. - U/A - 26AA: Levy and collection of goods and services tax in course of inter-State trade or commerce (GST) such tax shall be apportioned between the Union and the States on the recommendations of the Goods and Services Tax Council. - U/A - 270: Taxes levied & distributed between Union & States. It is on the recommendation of the Finance Commission. - U/A - 271: Surcharge on certain duties & taxes for the purposes of the Union. - U/A - 273: Grants in lieu of export duty on jute & jute products, (Assam, Bihar, Odisha & West Bengal) - U/A - 275: Grants from the Union to certain States for raising levels of administration of Scheduled areas & promotion of welfare of Scheduled Tribes, (Schedules V & VI States) - Union can make grants for any public purposes, even if it is not a tax.	- Supreme Court Nine Judge Constitution Bench of Dr. DY Chandrachud, C.J., held that royalty paid by mining operators to the Central government is not a tax and that States have the power to levy cesses on mining and mineral-use activities. - Royalty is a contractual consideration paid by the mining lessee to the lessor for enjoyment of mineral rights. M. P. V. Sundararaman & Co. v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1958). The legislative power to tax mineral rights vests with the State legislatures. Parliament does not have the legislative competence to tax mineral rights.
Background - Regulation of mines and mineral development is enumerated under both the Union List and the State List. - Parliament enacted the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) provides that the holder of a mining lease shall pay royalty in respect of any mineral removed or consumed from the leased area at the specified rates. - In the India Cement case, a seven-Judge Bench of this Court held that royalty is tax, and the State legislatures lack competence to levy taxes on mineral rights because the subject-matter is covered by the MMDR Act. - Later in time, in State of West Bengal v. Kesoram Industries Ltd (2004), a Constitution Bench of this Court held that the decision in India Cement (supra) stemmed from the fact that the royalty was levied on the removal of minerals.	

How will our SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme help you?

We understand that students face difficulties in recalling and effectively utilising current affairs from multiple scattered sources. SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme follows a multi-dimensional approach towards Current Affairs preparation covering political, economic, social, scientific, environmental, and international developments through a structured and exam-oriented framework.

Key Challenges faced by aspirants in current affairs preparation are:

- **Identifying important current affairs** for UPSC CSE Main Examination.
- Avoiding the **deluge of current affairs material** and focusing on quality over quantity.
- **Understanding the UPSC current affairs question pattern** and the difference between news and issues. (News talks about an incident while Issues focus on ideas)
- **Analyzing and establishing connections** between the forward and backward linkages of a current affairs topic.
- **Covering and connecting** current affairs with the static syllabus.
- **Adopting an active and engaging approach** rather than a passive and superficial one

HOW DOES THE PROGRAMME ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

1 Structured Approach

A structured and organised framework to cover diverse Current Affairs relevant for Mains and Interview stages.

2 Focused Coverage

Coverage aligned with the requirements of UPSC including politics, economy, science & technology, environment, international relations, and governance.

3 Time Efficiency

Streamlined preparation under one programme without the need to follow multiple scattered resources.

4 Integration with Syllabus

Integrated approach correlating Current Affairs with static portions of the UPSC syllabus.

5 Improve Main Answer Writing Skills

Learn to seamlessly incorporate Current Affairs into GS Paper I, II, III, and IV answers.

6 Boosts Essay and Interview Preparation

Develop issue-based understanding and depth required for Essay and Interview stages.

7 Confidence and Clarity

Regular classes help improve clarity on complex issues and build confidence for all stages of UPSC CSE.

Scan to Watch

How Our SMART Mains Current Affairs Programme

Helped UPSC Toppers 2024

Real Stories. Real Ranks. Real Results.



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