

Political Science & International Relations (PSIR)

OPTIONAL TEST SERIES PROGRAM

2026



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As an aspirant, you are investing everything into mastering your optional subject. You are reading the books, building your notes and understanding the content. But knowing the content is only the first step for mastering Mains. The **ultimate challenge** lies in the exam hall: transforming that **knowledge into high-scoring answers** under intense pressure.

For over a decade, **Vision IAS** has been the **trusted partner** of India's top rankers, not for merely imparting knowledge, but also helping them perfect its application through answer writing.

"From concepts to ranks, a complete journey in PSIR Optional"

PSIR OPTIONAL COMPREHENSIVE TEST SERIES + PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS (PYQ) SESSIONS

Program Content: 16 Tests + 20 Previous Year Questions (PYQs) Discussion & Strategy Sessions

PROGRAM FEATURES

PYQ Sessions



20 Faculty-Led PYQ Analysis & Strategy Sessions

Previous Year Questions Discussion and Strategy Sessions

- Sessions to Understand Important Themes and Trends through PYQs
- Build Effective Answer Structures to Bridge the Gap between UPSC Demand and Aspirants Understanding of Questions.
- Enhance Quality of Answers with Faculty Inputs



• **Unit Tests (8)**
2 Mini-tests per section of the syllabus
 • **Nature of Questions:** Easy to Medium focusing on coverage of the syllabus



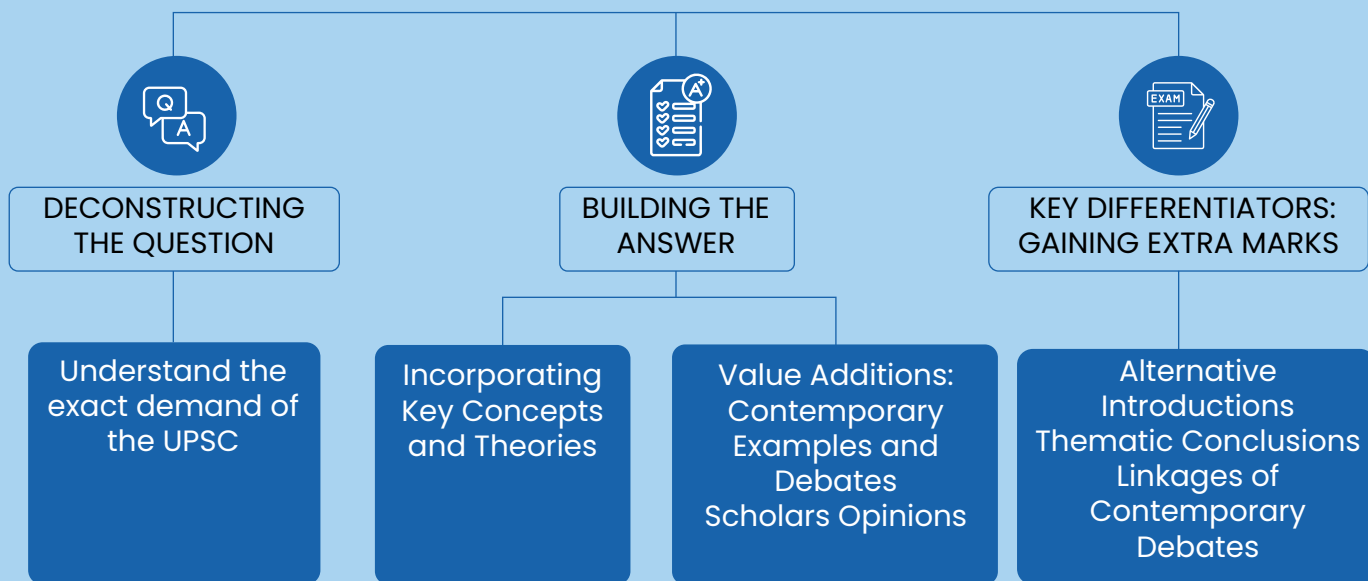
• **Sectional Tests (4)**
1 Part test per section of the Syllabus
 • **Nature of Questions:** Medium to Difficult testing analytical understanding of Aspirants to tackle uncertainty of UPSC Mains



• **Full-Length Tests (4)**
2 Full Length Test per Paper of **PSIR Optional**
 • **Nature of Questions:** Simulation of the real UPSC exam for comprehensive performance assessment

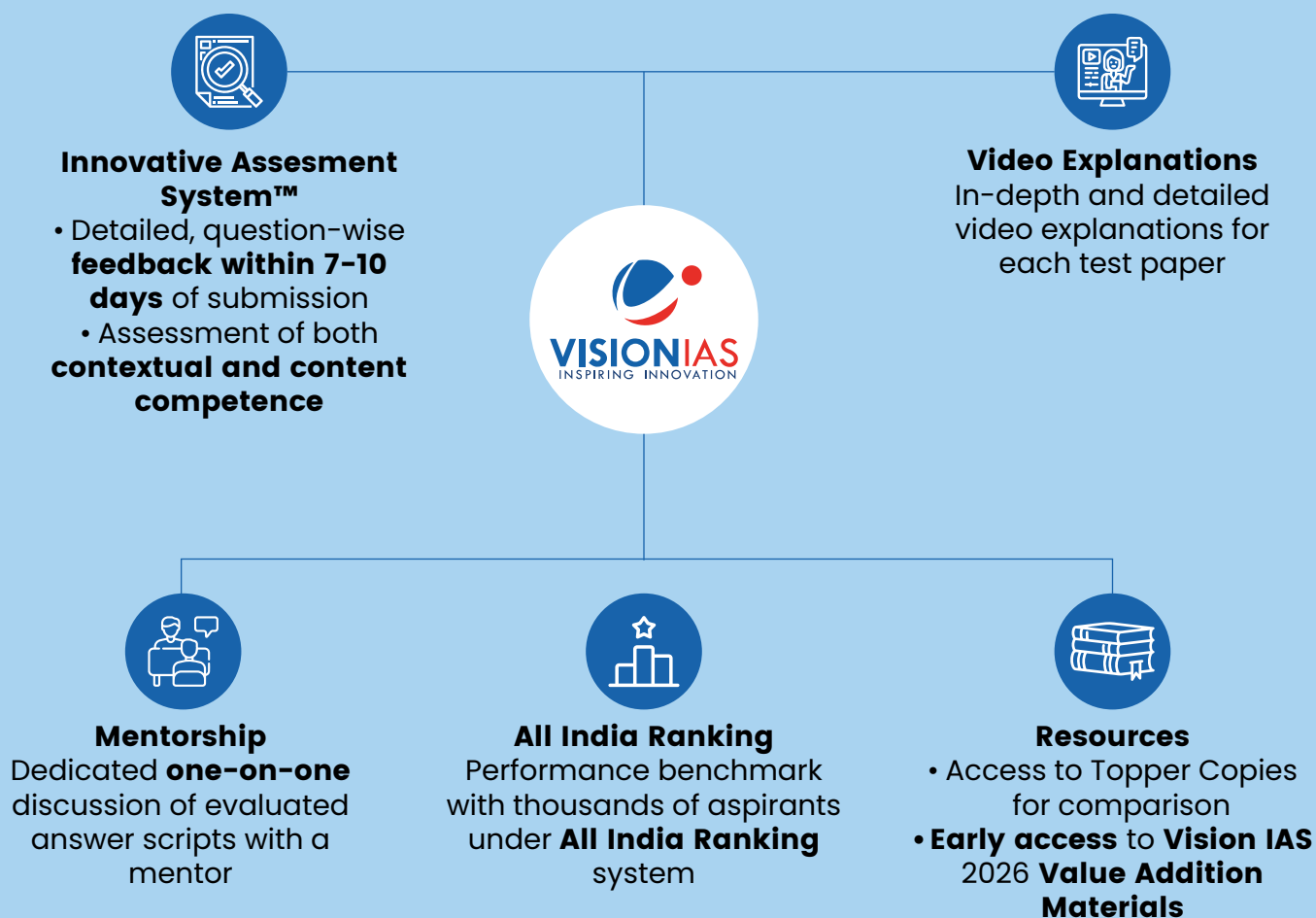
THE VisionIAS ANSWER WRITING BLUEPRINT

Moving beyond Model Answers to Answer Writing Blueprints



THE VISION IAS ADVANTAGE

Post-test Mentorship and Feedback



PSIR OPTIONAL TEST SERIES

Program One: 16 Tests

Program Features:

- **8 Unit Tests:** Mini Tests to cover **PSIR Optional** syllabus in parts.
- **4 Sectional Tests:** Part Tests covering the full syllabus Sectionwise for **PSIR Optional**
- **4 Full-Length Tests:** FLTs simulating UPSC Mains experience, to be conducted after Prelims 2026

Program Two: 8 Tests

Program Features:

- **4 Sectional Tests:** Part Tests covering the full syllabus Sectionwise for **PSIR Optional**
- **4 Full-Length Tests:** FLTs simulating UPSC Mains experience, to be conducted after Prelims 2026

Program	Fee	Module Number	Starting Date
PSIR Optional Comprehensive Test Series (16 Tests) + 20 Previous Year Questions (PYQ) Sessions	₹20,000	3695	23 November 2025
PSIR Optional Test Series - 16 Tests	₹14,000	3696	23 November 2025
PSIR Optional Test Series - 8 Tests	₹10,000	3697	14 December 2025

THE OPTIONAL PAPER DILEMMA: YOU KNOW THE SYLLABUS, SO WHY AREN'T YOU SCORING MORE?

OTHER PSIR OPTIONAL TEST SERIES	VISION IAS PSIR OPTIONAL TEST SERIES	
 GENERIC FEEDBACK	 CONCEPT CLARITY THROUGH PYQS	 PERSONALIZED EVALUATION
 VAGUE MODEL ANSWERS	 SYSTEMATIC ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE	
 OUTDATED QUESTION PAPER PATTERN	 SCORE IMPROVEMENT THROUGH MENTORSHIP	

Thus, whether you are:

- Just starting out and unsure of how to even begin writing a good answer,
- Already writing tests, but receiving vague feedback that doesn't show you how to improve, or
- An experienced aspirant whose scores are no longer improving despite knowing the content inside-out.

You need to utilize The **VisionIAS Advantage** and think like a topper. Success in UPSC comes with high scores in Mains examination and writing a high quality **toppers trusted** test series will surely lead to success in **UPSC Civil Service Exam**.

HOW OUR TEST SERIES FARED IN MAINS 2025

At **VisionIAS**, we don't just cover the syllabus but decode the very DNA of the UPSC examination. Our research-driven approach identifies emerging trends, recurring themes, and shifts in question patterns, ensuring that our test series doesn't just cover the syllabus—it anticipates the exam.

Here's how closely our test series reflected the UPSC Mains 2025:

UPSC CSE Mains 2025 Question	Our Test Series Question (2025)
PSIR Optional Paper 1	
Q 1(B). Write a note on relationship between equality and liberty from a multi-cultural perspective.	Relationship between liberty and equality. (Test 3334, Question I (b))
Q 2(a). What is the Marxist and Liberal approach towards the state? On what grounds theoretical differences between them are premised .	While liberalism views the State as a protector of individual rights, Marxism perceives it as an instrument of class oppression. Analyse. (Test 3338 Question 3 (b))
Q 2(c). Explain how Rawls used liberal and egalitarian perspective to develop his concept of distributive justice.	How does Rawls' difference principle balance the competing claims of liberty and equality? Illustrate with contemporary relevance (Test 3340 , Question 3 (c))
Q 4(b). Hannah Ardent analysed a few categories of vita activa. Explain	The distinctions between labour, work, and action are central to Arendt's political thought. Examine how these categories elucidate the human condition. (Test 3340 Question 4 a)
PSIR Optional Paper 2	
Q 5 (d). Does the Non-Aligned Movement have any future in the wake of India's growing indifference towards it?	With the recent trends in Indian Foreign policy, it is often argued that India has shifted away from its alignment with the Non-Aligned Movement. Critically analyse the statement using contemporary examples. (Test 3337 Question 2 a) NAM allowed India to maximise its autonomy without maximising confrontation. In light of this, assess India's balancing behaviour in the contemporary world order. (Abhyaas paper 2 Question 6 a) The Non-Aligned Movement today exists more in India's rhetoric than in its strategic calculus. Do you agree? (Test 3341, Q 5 (c))
Q 1d) Discuss the political socialization of open and closed societies.	The political sociology approach offers insights into the interplay between society and politics, but faces challenges in operationalisation. Discuss the contributions and limitations of this approach in comparative politics. (Test 3341 (4 b))
Q 5 (e) Historical ties between India and Japan grew into a 'special strategic and global partnership'. Comment.	India-Japan relations have evolved beyond developmental cooperation into a broader axis of strategic convergence. Discuss. (Test 3341 Q 7 (c))

TEST SCHEDULE & REFERENCE

Test No.	Date	Topics covered	References
Unit Test 1 [5185]	23 Nov 2025	1. Political Theory: meaning and approaches. 2. Political Ideologies: Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism, Fascism, Gandhism, and Feminism. 3. Western Political Thought: Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, John S. Mill, Marx, Gramsci, Hannah Arendt. 4. Indian Political Thought: Dharmashastra, Arthashastra, and Buddhist Traditions; Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Sri Aurobindo, M. K. Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, M. N. Roy.	• VisionIAS Value added Material (VAM) • OP Gauba- An Introduction to Political theory • Brian Nelson - Western Political Thought • OP Gauba- Political ideas and ideologies • OP Gauba- Indian Political Thought • Andrew Heywood- Politics • Andrew Heywood- Political Ideologies • Andrew Heywood- Political Theory an Introduction • Rajiv Bhargava and Ashok • Acharaya- Political theory an introduction • VR Mehta- Indian Political Thought • IGNOU, MPS001:-Political Theory • IGNOU, MPSE-003 • Western Political Thought -Plato to Marx • NCERT Class 11th -Political Theory
Unit Test 2 [5186]	7 Dec 2025	• Theories of state: Liberal, Neo-liberal, Marxist, Pluralist, Post-colonial, and Feminist. • Justice: Conceptions of justice with special reference to Rawl's theory of justice and its communitarian critiques. • Equality: Social, political, and economic; the relationship between equality and freedom; Affirmative action. • Rights: Meaning and theories; different kinds of rights; Concept of Human Rights. • Democracy: Classical and contemporary theories; different models of democracy representative, participatory and deliberative. • Concept of power: hegemony, ideology, and legitimacy	• VisionIAS Value added Material (VAM) • OP Gauba- An Introduction to Political theory • Brian Nelson - Western Political Thought • OP Gauba- Political ideas and ideologies • OP Gauba- Indian Political Thought • Andrew Heywood- Politics • Andrew Heywood- Political Ideologies • Rajiv Bhargava and Ashok • Acharaya- Political theory an introduction • VR Mehta- Indian Political Thought

			• IGNOU, MPS001:-Political Theory • IGNOU, MPSE-003 • Plato to Marx • Western Political Thought –NCERT Class 11th • Political Theory
Sectional Test 1 [5187]	14 Dec 2025	Complete Syllabus of Unit Test 1 and Unit Test 2	
Unit Test 3 [5188]	28 Dec 2025	(a) Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle: Constitutionalism to mass Satyagraha, Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience; Militant and Revolutionary Movements, Peasant and Workers Movements. (b) Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Liberal, Socialist, and Marxist; Radical Humanist and Dalit. Making of the Indian Constitution: Legacies of the British rule; different social and political perspectives. Salient Features of the Indian Constitution: The Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Duties, Directive Principles; Parliamentary System and Amendment Procedures; Judicial Review and Basic Structure doctrine. (a) Principal Organs of the Union Government: Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature, and Supreme Court. (b) Principal Organs of the State Government: Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature, and High Courts. Grassroots Democracy: Panchayati Raj and Municipal Government; Significance of 73rd and 74th Amendments; Grassroot movements. Statutory Institutions/Commissions: Election Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General, Finance Commission, Union Public Service Commission, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Women; National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Minorities, National Backward Classes Commission.	• VisionIAS value addition material • Bipan Chandra: India's struggle for Independence M. Laximkanth: Indian Polity • Indian Government and Politics –BL Fadia • DD Basu: An Introduction to the Indian Constitution Sujit Chaudhury, P. B Mehta, Madhav Khosla: The Oxford Handbook of the Indian Constitution Niraja Gopal Jayal et al: The Oxford Companion to Politics in India IGNOU, MP003-India: Democracy and Development • NCERT Class 12th: Politics In India Since Independence • NCERT Class 11th – Indian Constitution at Work. • Newspapers: The Hindu/Indian Express VisionIAS Monthly Current Affairs

Unit Test 4 [5189]	11 Jan 2026	Federalism: Constitutional provisions; changing nature of center-state relations; integrationist tendencies and regional aspirations; inter-state disputes. Planning and Economic Development: Nehruvian and Gandhian perspectives; Role of planning and public sector; Green Revolution, land reforms and agrarian relations; liberalization and economic reforms. Caste, Religion, and Ethnicity in Indian Politics. Party System: National and regional political parties, ideological and social bases of parties; Patterns of coalition politics; Pressure groups, trends in electoral behavior; changing socio-economic profile of Legislators. Social Movement: Civil liberties and human rights movements; women's movements; environmentalist movements.	• VisionIAS value addition material • Bipan Chandra: India's struggle for Independence • M. Laximkanth: Indian Polity • Indian Government and Politics –B L Fadia DD Basu: An Introduction to the Indian Constitution Sujit Chaudhury, P. B Mehta, Madhav Khosla: The Oxford Handbook of the Indian Constitution Himanshu Roy and M.P. • Singh: Indian Political System • Niraja Gopal Jayal et al: The Oxford Companion to Politics in India IGNOU, MP003-India: Democracy and Development • NCERT Class 12th: Politics in India Since Independence • NCERT Class 11th – Indian Constitution at Work. Newspapers: The Hindu/Indian Express • VisionIAS Monthly Current Affairs
Sectional Test 2 [5190]	18 Jan 2026	Complete Syllabus of Unit Test 3 and Unit Test 4	
Unit Test 5 [5191]	1 Feb 2026	Comparative Politics: Nature and major approaches; Political economy and political sociology perspectives; Limitations of the comparative method. State in Comparative Perspective: Characteristics and changing nature of the State in capitalist and socialist economies, and advanced industrial and developing societies. Politics of Representation and Participation: Political parties, pressure groups and social movements in advanced industrial and developing societies. Globalisation: Responses from developed	• VisionIAS value addition material • Andrew Heywood- Global Politics • John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia • Owens-Globalization of World Politics- • Ronald A. Chilcote: • Theories Of Comparative • Politics: The Search For A Paradigm • Comparative Politics – J.C. Johari • Comparative Politics

		Globalisation: Responses from developed and developing societies. Approaches to the Study of International Relations: Idealist, Realist, Marxist, Functionalist and Systems theory. Key Concepts in International Relations: National interest, security and power; Balance of power and deterrence; Trans-national actors and collective security; World capitalist economy and globalisation.	• Comparative Politics • Today: Gabriel A Almond et al • IGNOU • MPS002-International Relations: Theory and Problems IGNOU, MPS-004 • Comparative politics: Issues and Trends NCERT: Contemporary • World Politics • Think tanks Websites like (Carnegie, IDSA, ORF etc) • Newspapers (Indian Express and The Hindu)
Unit Test 6 [5192]	15 Feb 2026	Changing International Political Order: (a) Rise of superpowers; Strategic and ideological Bipolarity, arms race and cold war; Nuclear threat; (b) Non-aligned movement: Aims and achievements. (c) Collapse of the Soviet Union; Unipolarity and American hegemony; Relevance of non-alignment in the contemporary world. Evolution of the International Economic System: From Bretton woods to WTO; Socialist economies and the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance); Third World demand for new international economic order; Globalisation of the world economy. United Nations: Envisaged role and actual record; Specialized UN agencies-aims and functioning; the need for UN reforms. Regionalisation of World Politics: EU, ASEAN, APEC, AARC, NAFTA. Contemporary Global Concerns: Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice terrorism, nuclear proliferation.	• VisionIAS value addition material • Andrew Heywood- Global Politics • John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens-Globalization of World Politics- • Ronald A. Chilcote: Theories Of Comparative Politics: The Search For A Paradigm • Comparative Politics - J.C. Johari • Comparative Politics Today: Gabriel A Almond et al • IGNOU • MPS002-International Relations: Theory and Problems IGNOU, • MPS-004 Comparative politics: Issues and Trends • NCERT: Contemporary World Politics • Think tanks Websites like (Carnegie, IDSA , ORF etc) • Newspapers (Indian Express and The Hindu)
Sectional Test 3 [5193]	22 Feb 2026	Complete Syllabus of Unit Test 5 and Unit Test 6	

Unit Test 7 [5194]	8 Mar 2026	1. Indian Foreign Policy: Determinants of foreign policy; the institutions of policy-making; continuity and change. 2. India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement Different phases; current role. 3. India and South Asia: (a) Regional Co-operation: SAARC-past performance and future prospects. (b) South Asia as a Free Trade Area. (c) India's "Look East" policy. (d) Impediments to regional co-operation: River water disputes; illegal cross-border migration; Ethnic conflicts and insurgencies; Border disputes.	• VisionIAS value addition material • Jayntanuja Bandopadhyay-The Making of India's Foreign Policy • V. N. Khanna- Foreign Policy of India • David M. Malone-Does the Elephant Dance • Shyam Saran-How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21st Century • Shivshankar Menon- Choices: Inside the Making of Indian Foreign Policy • Sumit Ganguly- Engaging the World: Indian Foreign Policy Since 1947 • Rajiv Sikri-Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy • The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy • Newspapers: The Hindu/ Indian Express • Vision IAS Monthly Current Affairs • Think tanks Websites like (Carnegie, IDSA , ORF etc)
Unit Test 8 [5195]	22 Mar 2026	India and the Global South: Relations with Africa and Latin America; Leadership role in the demand for NIEO and WTO negotiations. India and the Global Centres of Power: USA, EU, Japan, China and Russia. India and the UN System: Role in UN Peace-keeping; Demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council. India and the Nuclear Question: Changing perceptions and policy. Recent development in Indian Foreign Policy: India's position on the recent crises in Afghanistan, Iraq, and West Asia, growing relations with US and Israel; Vision of a new world order.	• VisionIAS value addition material • Jayntanuja Bandopadhyay-The Making of India's Foreign Policy • V. N. Khanna- Foreign Policy of India • David M. Malone-Does the Elephant Dance • Shyam Saran-How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21st Century • Shivshankar Menon- Choices: Inside the Making of Indian Foreign Policy • Sumit Ganguly- Engaging the World: Indian Foreign Policy Since 1947 • Rajiv Sikri-Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy • The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy

			• Newspapers: The Hindu/ Indian Express • VisionIAS Monthly Current Affairs • Think tanks Websites like (Carnegie, IDSA , ORF etc)
Sectional Test 4 [5196]	29 Mar 2026	Complete Syllabus of Unit Test 7 and Unit Test 8	

FLT-1 [5197]	14 Jun 2026	Complete syllabus of PSIR Paper I (Full Length Test)
FLT-2 [5198]	28 June 2026	Complete syllabus of PSIR Paper II (Full Length Test)
FLT-3 [5199]	12 July 2026	Complete syllabus of PSIR Paper I (Full Length Test)
FLT-4 [5200]	26 Jul 2026	Complete syllabus of PSIR Paper II (Full Length Test)

NOTE

- In all of the three programs, Tests can be **rescheduled (postponed, but not preponed)** based on your convenience.
- **Offline test centers** are available in multiple cities including Delhi, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Chandigarh, and Guwahati. Centers remain closed on Thursdays.
- **Study materials and test booklets** are provided in **soft copy** only and will not be physically dispatched.

HEARTIEST Congratulations

TO ALL SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

10

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