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MAINS MASTERY 2026 · GS PAPER IV · QUESTION 11 · CASE STUDY · STUDENT EDITION

Rajapuram: Ethical Leadership and Non-Partisan Administration

UPSC CSE MAINS 2026: SUB-QUESTIONS (CASE SET OUT ON PAGE 2)

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Directive: Discuss, compare and choose | 20 marks | 250 words

Ethics case study: conflict and impartiality

1 **PYQ Deep Decode** — Case, demand and structure
2 **PYQ Intelligence** — Ethics and conflict PYQs
3 **Additional information** — Tools, options and safeguards
4 **Pitfalls and variations** — Six pitfalls and variations
5 **The model answer** — 252-word answer, two parts
6 **Other ways to write it** — Alternative decision outlines
7 **Quick recall** — Sixteen rapid-recall facts
8 **Write it yourself** — Seven checks and sources

Guranchal Ma'am, Founder, UPSC Gurus · upscgurus.in

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1

PYQ Deep Decode

Read this case as an ethical decision under pressure. First establish the facts, stakeholders and dilemma; then identify what the two questions demand, the hidden test of impartiality, the structure of the answer, and the form in which Rajan's decision should be presented.

1.0 The case: Rajapuram's crisis of public trust

The case is not merely about suppressing ethnic violence. It places a newly appointed District Magistrate in a situation where **the institutions expected to restore peace have themselves lost the confidence of the people**. Rajan must protect lives, restore administrative authority and facilitate reconciliation, while ensuring that every decision is lawful, fair and demonstrably non-partisan.

THE CASE AS UPSC SET IT

Rajapuram is a border district. Jhara and Biru, its two major communities are in continual conflict with each other. The social fabric is fractured and demands mending. Ethnic tensions between the two communities have erupted into violence resulting in a large number of deaths. The stated causes are conflicting land claims, uneven resource allocation and inadequate political representation in government bodies. Separate relief camps had to be created for the two communities. The situation is volatile and appears to be getting out of control. Rajan has been appointed the District Magistrate (DM) of Rajapuram and tasked to quickly get the situation under control. His immediate tasks include restoring administrative authority, reopening the highway and initiating peace talks. On taking over his appointment, Rajan realized that the inter-community rivalry had even seeped into the local administration and police. With functional neutrality being the immediate casualty, it had made both communities distrustful of the government. The neighbouring country could utilize the opportunity to spur insurgent activity and further aggravate the situation. Rajan favoured a controlled approach starting with opening the highway to restore food and medical supplies. He toyed with the idea of requisitioning CRPF units to help restore administrative control.

Case element	What UPSC has established	The ethical significance
Place and communities	Rajapuram is a border district; Jhara and Biru are its two principal communities.	Community protection and internal security are interconnected.
Conflict and harm	Persistent rivalry has escalated into violence and numerous deaths; separate relief camps exist.	Life, dignity, safety and humanitarian assistance are immediate duties.
Underlying grievances	Contested land, unequal resource allocation and inadequate political representation.	Peace requires addressing substantive injustice, not only controlling violence.
Institutional breakdown	Community rivalry has entered the administration and police, destroying functional neutrality.	The State's credibility and capacity to act fairly are in question.
Immediate assignments	Rajan must restore authority, reopen the highway and begin peace talks.	He faces simultaneous humanitarian, security and reconciliation obligations.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Case element	What UPSC has established	The ethical significance
Available instrument	Rajan is considering CRPF assistance while prioritising the highway.	Lawful force may help establish security, but cannot substitute for public trust.
External vulnerability	A neighbouring country could exploit instability to encourage insurgency.	Preventive vigilance is necessary without treating a possible threat as established interference.
Central dilemma	Every intervention may be interpreted through the communities' existing distrust.	Can Rajan restore order and demonstrate impartiality without delaying protection or compromising justice?

Stakeholder map: Rajan; Jhara and Biru residents, leaders and displaced families; women, children, older persons and other vulnerable people in relief camps; local police and administrative employees; health and supply agencies; State authorities; CRPF and other security agencies if deployed; independent mediators and civil society; and communities exposed to disruption along the highway. The neighbouring country is a potential security threat in the case, not an established participant in the violence.

1.1 The demand

The question has **two distinct tasks**. Part (a) asks Rajan to identify and discuss the ethical issues arising from the crisis. Part (b) asks him to **compare the options open to him and select the ethically defensible course**. The choice must answer two tests simultaneously: it should **protect his non-partisan image** and **not compromise ethics**. Naming values without explaining their conflict is insufficient; listing measures without evaluating alternatives is equally insufficient.

Words in the question	What they ask you to do	What goes wrong if you miss them
(a) Discuss the ethical issues	Identify the relevant ethical duties, conflicts and competing obligations, and explain why each matters in this particular situation.	A generic list of values such as honesty, integrity and empathy without their application.
need to be addressed	Prioritise live ethical problems that require administrative decisions rather than describing abstract moral ideals.	Treating the case as a theoretical discussion detached from urgent action.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan?	Present genuine alternative courses, including their advantages, risks and practical limitations.	Presenting one preferred strategy as though there were no alternatives.
Which option	Make a definite choice, or select a coherent combination after assessing the alternatives.	Ending with a menu of possibilities but no recommendation.
protection of his non-partisan image	Explain how the selected approach will be perceived as fair by both communities, not merely intended as fair by Rajan.	Assuming that a public declaration of neutrality establishes public confidence.
without compromising ethics	Test the preferred response against rights, justice, humanitarian duties, legality, proportionality and accountability.	Justifying excessive force, collective punishment, discriminatory relief or inaction in the name of neutrality.
The border setting	Factor the specified risk of external exploitation into the decision, while distinguishing a warning from proven wrongdoing.	Turning the entire answer into an insurgency-control exercise.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
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THE DEMAND IN ONE LINE

Explain the ethical conflicts facing Rajan, compare his realistic courses of action, and justify a lawful, humanitarian and confidence-building response that restores order while demonstrating impartiality.

1.2 The hidden demand

The real test is whether **Rajan can establish genuine impartiality merely by appearing neutral when the administration itself has become partisan**. The case says functional neutrality has already been lost. Therefore, speeches, equal-duration meetings or symmetrical deployment orders cannot by themselves repair the damage.

Rajan needs **substantive neutrality**: protection determined by vulnerability and threat, relief determined by assessed need, policing determined by evidence, and administrative decisions governed by published criteria. That may require **unequal quantities of assistance** where needs differ, without discriminatory standards. The small final part of the answer must therefore explain how **equal protection and fair procedures create visible neutrality**.

The distinction between appearance and practice is the centre of this case.

Test of neutrality	What merely appears fair	What establishes actual fairness
Police action	Announcing that both communities will face identical enforcement.	Using the same legal standard, independently verified evidence and proportionate measures against actual offenders.
Relief	Sending the same number of food packets to both camps.	Applying the same eligibility rules but allocating quantities according to documented numbers and needs.
Administration	Declaring every existing officer neutral.	Investigating substantiated bias, assigning credible personnel, recording decisions and providing independent review.
Dialogue	Inviting two dominant community representatives to one meeting.	Consulting both communities and including displaced people, women and less powerful voices through safe channels.
Security	Deploying forces equally everywhere for visual balance.	Allocating protection according to credible threat assessments, while safeguarding every community.

WEAK

Rajan should maintain neutrality, summon CRPF, distribute equal relief and organise peace talks. Both communities will then trust his administration.

STRONG

Rajan should secure humanitarian access through a risk-assessed operation, seek CRPF support through the appropriate State and Union channels, investigate administrative bias, publish need-based relief criteria and engage both communities through representative peace mechanisms. Neutrality must be established by the fairness of decisions and their verifiable outcomes.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

1.3 The structure

The answer follows **the question's own two parts**. Part 1 addresses the ethical issues; Part 2 compares available options and justifies the preferred response. The hidden demand forms a **small final part**, showing why demonstrated equal protection matters more than an image of neutrality. The shares refer to the body between introduction and conclusion and are teaching guides, not UPSC rules.

Introduction	1. (a) Ethical issues about two-fifths	2. (b) Options and choice about half	3. Demonstrable neutrality about one-tenth	Conclusion

Part 1 (a) Ethical issues that need to be addressed in the Rajapuram conflict — about two-fifths

Protection of life and humanitarian relief	Security, medical care, food, shelter and dignity across both camps.
Administrative and police impartiality	Biased institutions, unequal enforcement and accountability.
Equity and representation	Land disputes, uneven resources and exclusion from decision-making.
Public order and essential supplies	Highway access, lawful restrictions, proportionality and competing risks.
Trust and external interference	Credible communication, reconciliation and security vigilance.

Part 2 (b) Options open to Rajan and the choice that protects his non-partisan image without compromising ethics — about half

Highway and humanitarian supplies	Security assessment, protected access and continuity of essential services.
CRPF and lawful force	Possible stabilisation benefits, formal deployment channels, necessity and restraint.
Correct institutional bias	Independent review, accountable policing and credible field officers.
Peace talks	Representative dialogue, confidence-building and protection of vulnerable voices.
Compare and select	Reject isolated force or passive negotiation; justify a coordinated, phased response.

Part 3 Establishing neutrality through demonstrably equal protection and fair action rather than the appearance of impartiality alone — about one-tenth

Objective criteria	Need-based relief, risk-based deployment and evidence-based enforcement.
Visible accountability	Written orders, common standards, grievance mechanisms and public review.
Judgement	Fairness must be demonstrable even when decisions are necessarily different.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

1.4 How to present it

This is a **case study with a comparative decision**. The most economical answer combines **headed points for ethical issues** with a **compact options-and-choice format**. A short concluding line distinguishes substantive neutrality from merely balanced appearances. In 250 words, the answer should not reproduce the case narrative, a legal history or a long chronology.

Form	Fit here	Reason
Headed issues, compact option comparison, justified choice	**Best**	Directly addresses (a) and (b); permits a clear decision and its safeguards within the word limit.
Three-stage action plan	Good	Shows sequencing of urgent security, institutional repair and reconciliation; must still compare alternatives explicitly.
Stakeholder matrix throughout	Possible	Useful for identifying competing interests but can obscure the required choice.
Only a force-deployment plan	Weak	Addresses one instrument, not the humanitarian, procedural and reconciliation duties.
Only moral commentary	Weak	Fails the District Magistrate's operational responsibility and the request to select an option.

1.5 The introduction and the conclusion

The introduction serves the whole question. It establishes that Rajapuram presents an interlocking crisis of human security, institutional credibility and community trust. It places Rajan's decision under the obligation to restore peace lawfully and impartially.

The conclusion settles the choice. It endorses a coordinated response: protect lives, reopen essential access, correct bias and sustain reconciliation. It ends with the principle that **neutrality is earned through equal protection and accountable action**, not merely asserted.

2 PYQ Intelligence 2013 to 2026

The public-administration context behind the case, the ethical skills UPSC has repeatedly examined, and the connected areas worth preparing for future questions.

2.1 Why the subject was topical in 2026

India's experience of communal and ethnic violence, displacement, contested public authority and difficult security choices gives this fictional case a recognisable administrative setting. The Manipur crisis from 2023, judicial supervision of humanitarian responses, police accountability requirements and the Union's assistance to conflict-affected States provide useful evidence. **Context is not cause:** UPSC does not disclose why it selects an individual case study. The developments below were publicly known before the 2026 Mains examination.

When	What happened	Why it matters for this case
17 July 2018	In **Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court issued preventive, remedial and punitive directions against mob violence and lynching. These included district nodal officers of at least Superintendent of Police rank, intelligence gathering, prompt registration and investigation of offences, and compensation measures.	Public confidence requires preventive policing, neutral enforcement and accountability, not reassurance alone.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

When	What happened	Why it matters for this case
May 2023 onward	Ethnic violence in **Manipur** caused deaths, displacement and the creation of relief camps. The State and Union authorities faced simultaneous responsibilities for public order, security and rehabilitation.	The same kinds of obligations arise in Rajapuram. The real conflict and the fictional case must not be treated as identical.
7 August 2023	In **Dinganglung Gangmei v. Mutum Churamani Meetei and connected proceedings**, the Supreme Court constituted a three-member committee headed by former Chief Justice **Gita Mittal** to examine violence against women and measures for relief, rehabilitation, medical and psychological support. The judgment also addressed investigation of serious crimes.	Humanitarian care and independent scrutiny must accompany restoration of public order.
1 July 2024	The **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** and **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023** came into force. BNSS Section 163 addresses urgent orders concerning apprehended danger; Section 164 addresses land or water disputes likely to breach the peace.	Emergency action must rest on the applicable law, not obsolete references or unrestricted discretion.
20 May 2025	The Ministry of Home Affairs published its North East Division statement on relief and rehabilitation for people displaced by public-order disturbances. It reported special assistance to Manipur totalling **₹247.26 crore in 2023-24** and **₹349.48 crore in 2024-25**, covering relief camps, rehabilitation and nutritional and hygiene support.	Security operations cannot be separated from sustained, funded humanitarian protection.
4 February 2026	**Yumnam Khemchand Singh** took oath as Chief Minister of Manipur, with **Nemcha Kipgen** and **Losii Dikho** as Deputy Chief Ministers, following the period of President's Rule.	Restoring representative government and rebuilding inter-community confidence are related but distinct tasks.

Earlier institutional context is equally important. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission submitted **Ethics in Governance** on 12 February 2007, **Public Order** on 26 June 2007 and **Capacity Building for Conflict Resolution** on 17 March 2008. The Ministry of Home Affairs' revised **Guidelines on Communal Harmony** were circulated with the Home Secretary's letter dated 23 June 2008. The All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 were amended through the notification dated 6 August 2014, published on 8 August 2014, expressly setting out political neutrality, fairness, impartiality and responsiveness among the standards of conduct.

2.2 The skill UPSC keeps testing

Across the GS Paper IV papers, UPSC has tested the same central abilities in different settings: **recognise ethical injury, uphold impartiality, understand institutional failure, compare alternatives and defend a practicable decision**. Rajapuram combines these requirements with communal conflict, humanitarian responsibilities and a border-security risk. The PYQs below reproduce the question texts as recorded in the official-paper question bank, preserving their printed wording and punctuation.

Year	The question as UPSC set it	What it asked of you	What changed in 2026
2013 GS IV, Q11(a)	(a) Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.	Identify ethical issues in a case involving the Sivakasi firecracker industry and child labour.	The ethical issues now concern violence, displacement and compromised State institutions.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Year	The question as UPSC set it	What it asked of you	What changed in 2026
2016 GS IV, Q1(b)	Why should impartiality and non-partisanship be considered as foundational values in public services, especially in the present day socio-political context? Illustrate your answer with examples.	Explain and illustrate foundational civil-service values.	The values must be operationalised when government departments themselves appear partisan.
2019 GS IV, Q11	If you are the same police officer, identify the various dimensions of the crisis. Based on your understanding, suggest measures to deal with the crisis.	Respond to an interconnected frontier-district crisis involving narcotics, criminality and suspected official collusion.	Ethnic conflict and potentially compromised police legitimacy become central.
2021 GS IV, Q5(b)	Should impartial and being non-partisan be considered as indispensable qualities to make a successful civil servant? Discuss with illustrations.	Defend the necessity of impartiality and non-partisanship.	Determine how an officer can demonstrate those qualities through contested decisions.
2023 GS IV, Q8(b)	(b) Evaluate the options available to you, being District Magistrate of the area.	Compare a DM's choices during an urgent disaster-response dilemma.	The DM's choices now combine emergency relief, institutional reform and peace-building.
2024 GS IV, Q11(a)	(a) Discuss all options available to the District Collector as a District Magistrate.	Identify the options of a Collector confronting a district-level water crisis.	The decision environment involves hostile communities, biased institutions and an immediate security threat.
2025 GS IV, Q2(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.	Examine competing ethical claims involving security and development in border areas.	The border dilemma concerns protecting communities and preventing possible insurgent exploitation.
2026 GS IV, Q2(b)	Discuss how national security can be balanced with concerns of human rights.	Reconcile security obligations with rights protection.	Rajan must achieve precisely this reconciliation through a defensible administrative choice.

Also related, verbatim: 2014 GS IV, Q5(a): The current society is plagued with widespread trust-deficit. What are the consequences of this situation for personal well-being and for societal well-being? What can you do at the personal level to make yourself trustworthy? 2018 GS IV, Q5(b): Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration. 2026 GS IV, Q6(a): On the request of his Personal Assistant (PA), the District Magistrate (DM) stops the transfer of a schoolteacher who takes private tuition for his daughter diagnosed with learning disability. In this context, discuss the aspects of empathy versus compliance with rules.

CARRY THIS METHOD TO ANY CASE INVOLVING PUBLIC DISORDER AND COMPROMISED INSTITUTIONS

1. **Identify** the people at risk, the authority responsible and the immediate harm.
2. **Separate** the ethical issues from their possible administrative remedies.
3. **Compare** actual options on legality, effectiveness, rights, fairness and institutional credibility.
4. **Choose** a coherent response and explain why competing approaches are inadequate alone.
5. **Demonstrate** how the decision will remain impartial in implementation and public scrutiny.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

2.3 What to prepare next

CONSTITUTION, LAW AND INSTITUTIONS

Articles 14 and 21	Equality before law and equal protection of laws; life and personal liberty.
Article 355	Union's duty to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance.
State List, Entries 1 and 2	Public order and police are primarily State responsibilities.
BNSS, 2023	Sections 148, 163 and 164: dispersal of assemblies, urgent preventive orders and land disputes threatening peace.
AIS Conduct Rules, 1968	Rule 3: integrity, duty, political neutrality, fairness, accountability and non-discrimination.
Second ARC	Fourth report on ethics, fifth on public order, seventh on conflict resolution.

ETHICAL CONCEPTS AND DECISION TOOLS

Impartiality	Decisions based on relevant evidence and public interest, not identity or affiliation.
Non-partisanship	No preference for a community, faction or political patron.
Equity versus identical treatment	Equal criteria may require different support for different levels of need.
Procedural justice	Neutral decision-makers, consistent rules, reasons and review.
Proportionality	Restrictions or force should be justified by their lawful purpose and necessity.
Conflict transformation	Address grievances, institutions and relationships, not merely the immediate confrontation.

3 Additional information

Everything needed to reason through Rajapuram as a District Magistrate. Tier 1 provides the ethical analysis, operational choices and legal safeguards demanded by the question. Tier 2 examines the wider questions of police legitimacy, ethnic conflict, conflict resolution and durable peace.

TIER 1 · ESSENTIAL: THE ETHICAL ISSUES, RAJAN'S OPTIONS AND THE PREFERRED RESPONSE

From emergency response to durable peace

Rajan's response should follow a logical order. Urgent protection cannot await dialogue, but protective operations must not deepen the grievance that created the crisis. The steps below can overlap, with the first two receiving immediate priority.

Protect Lives, camps, medical care → **Restore** Highway, lawful security → **Neutralise** Bias and unequal enforcement → **Reconcile** Dialogue and grievance redressal

A teaching flow for sequencing the four tasks. It is not a statutory operational procedure. At each stage, the safeguards are the same: legality, proportionality, reasoned decisions, equal protection and documented accountability.

(a) The ethical issues in Rajapuram

Ethical issue	The conflict in the case	What responsible administration requires
1. Right to life and dignity	Violence has caused many deaths; separated families may lack safety, food, healthcare and essential supplies. Inaction can produce further preventable harm. Articles 14 and 21 establish the constitutional foundation for protection.	**Preservation of life first.** Rescue, emergency medical treatment, safe shelter, food, water, sanitation, protection of vulnerable people and timely assistance to all victims.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Ethical issue	The conflict in the case	What responsible administration requires
2. Impartiality and non-partisanship	Ethnic loyalties have entered the administration and police. Officers may favour one community in enforcement, allocation or grievance redressal. Rajan inherits distrust before taking his first decision.	Integrity screening, credible postings, scrutiny of complaints, impartial investigation and recorded reasons. No collective attribution of guilt.
3. Distributive justice	Uneven resource allocation is identified as a cause of conflict. Equal-sized allocations can themselves be unfair if the populations, losses and vulnerabilities differ.	Transparent, evidence-based assessment of need, published eligibility rules and accessible grievance correction.
4. Land rights and procedural justice	Competing land claims can generate fear of permanent dispossession. Emergency administration cannot legitimately settle complex ownership claims through intimidation or political bargaining.	Preserve records, prevent unlawful seizure, use appropriate legal procedures and arrange independent review of contested claims.
5. Representation and voice	Inadequate political representation is part of the grievance. Meetings confined to powerful community leaders may reproduce exclusion and silence displaced or vulnerable people.	Inclusive consultation and accessible participation. Matters requiring statutory or State-level change must be referred to the competent authority.
6. Public order versus liberty	The highway must reopen, but aggressive operations can escalate casualties, invite allegations of targeting or worsen distrust. Conversely, indefinite delay imperils food and medicine supplies.	Necessary, lawful and proportionate restrictions; protected relief access; prompt restoration of mobility where safe.
7. Humanitarian neutrality	Two separate camps may be necessary for immediate safety, but differential service levels or coercive camp arrangements can reinforce hostility.	Equal standards of protection, needs-based assistance, voluntary and safe return when conditions permit, and independent monitoring.
8. Accountability for wrongdoing	Violence, administrative collusion and possibly selective policing undermine the rule of law. A peace deal that conceals serious offences can deny justice to victims.	Evidence-based FIRs and investigations, preservation of evidence, protection of victims and witnesses, and legally appropriate disciplinary action.
9. Truthful communication	Rumours about attacks, relief allocations and official affiliations could inflame tensions. Unsupported claims about a neighbouring country may further polarise the district.	Verified public briefings, accessible information, prompt correction of rumours and responsible treatment of security intelligence.
10. Internal security and human rights	The border creates a potential vulnerability to insurgent exploitation. Treating members of either community as security threats solely because of identity would be both unethical and operationally damaging.	Specific intelligence-led vigilance, lawful inter-agency coordination and safeguards against arbitrary detention, profiling and collective punishment.

(b) The options open to Rajan

The alternatives should be compared before choosing. The key distinction is between **an isolated intervention** and **a coordinated course with safeguards**.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Option	Possible benefit	Risk or limitation	Assessment
1. Prioritise reopening the highway using available police	Restores the passage of food, medicine, ambulances and essential personnel. Demonstrates responsive administration.	If the route is contested or insecure, a hurried operation may cause casualties and be portrayed as favouring one side.	**Necessary priority**, subject to reconnaissance, secure movement and non-discriminatory access.
2. Seek CRPF or RAF assistance through proper channels	Adds trained capacity where compromised local forces cannot contain violence; may reassure residents if deployment is visibly professional.	Could appear militarised, provoke resistance or become a substitute for correcting local administrative failures.	**Conditional supporting measure.** Seek State and Union approval when capacity and threat assessments justify it.
3. Depend principally on local administration and police	Uses familiar personnel and local knowledge without waiting for reinforcement.	The case explicitly establishes compromised neutrality, making unchecked reliance on these institutions ethically and operationally weak.	**Not credible alone.** Existing capacity must be reviewed, supervised and supplemented where necessary.
4. Concentrate on peace negotiations first	May reduce hostility and create voluntary cooperation without coercion.	Negotiations can be undermined by ongoing violence; civilians cannot be left unprotected while leaders deliberate.	**Essential but insufficient alone.** Dialogue should begin alongside protective measures.
5. Transfer or replace allegedly partisan officers immediately	Can interrupt continuing bias and signal that official misconduct will not be tolerated.	Unverified accusations, arbitrary transfers or identity-based selection could reproduce injustice; some actions require higher-authority approval.	**Targeted correction.** Use evidence, lawful authority, fair procedures and independent supervision.
6. Combine protected access, conditional reinforcement, institutional correction and dialogue	Addresses immediate danger while rebuilding credibility and creating a route to durable settlement.	Requires coordination, consistent communication and sustained oversight.	**Preferred option.** A phased but overlapping strategy, anchored in the same fair standards for both communities.

The preferred course: what Rajan should actually do

Priority	Action and mechanism	Ethical safeguard and evidence
Immediate: secure lives and supplies	Convene the DM, SP and essential-services teams; obtain reliable information on violence, the highway, camp needs and medical emergencies. Arrange ambulances, temporary medical facilities, food, potable water and emergency supply movement. Assess the highway before organising protected reopening and continuing passage.	Protection follows **threat and need**, not community identity. Record movement restrictions, relief distribution and unmet needs. The MHA Guidelines on Communal Harmony, paragraphs 9.2 to 9.4, require non-discriminatory relief, essential services and properly supported camps.
Immediate: stabilise public order	Use available police and executive-magistracy powers within law. Where credible evidence shows inadequate capacity, escalate a request for appropriate CRPF or RAF reinforcement through State authorities and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Coordinate security plans and operational responsibilities.	Necessary and proportionate action, clear orders, protection of civilians and accountability for misconduct. **A DM does not independently command deployment of Union CAPF units.** MHA states that CAPFs support States on request, subject to security requirements and availability.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Priority	Action and mechanism	Ethical safeguard and evidence
Immediate: restore procedural integrity	Review critical police and administrative postings; obtain confidential complaints; assign officers of proven integrity to sensitive roles. Seek authorised transfers, disciplinary action or independent investigation where supported by evidence.	Do not punish an official merely for belonging to either community. Apply conduct rules, evidence, opportunity for response where required and the competent authority's powers.
Early: establish a public record of fairness	Publish service standards and accessible relief criteria; appoint camp grievance officers; record complaints, decisions, access restoration and assistance delivered. Separate confidential victim and intelligence information from public reporting.	Equal eligibility and transparent reasons, with different quantities permitted where objectively justified by different needs.
Early: initiate representative talks	Conduct initial separate consultations when a joint meeting is unsafe, followed by facilitated joint dialogue. Include legitimate representatives, displaced households, women, youth and persons otherwise excluded from dominant leadership structures.	Secure participation without coercion. Consultation is not a licence to bargain away prosecution of serious offences or lawful land rights.
Continuing: address structural grievances	Commission transparent land-record verification; map disputed sites and resource gaps; review development allocations; refer political-representation issues to competent State and statutory institutions. Publish implementation milestones.	Use uniform criteria, independent verification and legally available remedies. Avoid promising redistribution or representation changes outside the DM's authority.
Continuing: prevent recurrence	Strengthen community policing, independent intelligence verification, sensitive-area monitoring, public communication and peace committees. Coordinate border-security intelligence with authorised agencies.	Preventive vigilance without ethnic profiling. Assess outcomes by civilian safety, reduction in violations, functioning services and confidence in complaint resolution.

The legal and ethical toolbox

Instrument	What it actually provides	Correct use in Rajapuram
Constitution, Article 14	Equality before law and equal protection of the laws within India.	Equal legal protection for Jhara and Biru, including impartial policing and common relief criteria.
Constitution, Article 21	Protection of life and personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.	Make civilian protection, safe healthcare and lawful security operations central to the response.
Constitution, Article 355	The Union's duty to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance and ensure constitutional government.	Explains the Union's constitutional responsibilities. It does not independently authorise Rajan to requisition or command CRPF units.
BNSS, 2023, Section 148	Provides for dispersal of specified unlawful or peace-threatening assemblies through the civil-force mechanism and prescribed authorities.	Address violent assemblies through lawful powers, not an unrestricted order to use force.
BNSS, 2023, Section 163	Enables specified Executive Magistrates to issue written orders in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger, subject to conditions, duration and review provisions.	Use narrowly justified preventive directions where legally warranted, rather than treating restrictions as an indefinite substitute for peace.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Instrument	What it actually provides	Correct use in Rajapuram
BNSS, 2023, Section 164	Provides a procedure where disputes concerning land, water or their boundaries are likely to cause a breach of peace, focusing on actual possession within its statutory scope.	Help prevent violence over contested land while respecting the separate legal process for determining title and other substantive rights.
All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968, Rule 3	Requires integrity and devotion to duty. Rule 3(1A) includes political neutrality, merit, fairness, impartiality, accountability and responsiveness; Rule 3(2B) includes decisions in public interest and non-discrimination.	Provides a direct ethical and service-conduct test for Rajan's actions and his supervision of the administration.
MHA Guidelines on Communal Harmony, 2008	Cover preventive planning, sensitive-area policing, peace committees, personnel integrity, neutral enforcement, investigations, relief and rehabilitation.	A practical administrative framework for Rajapuram. The guidelines are executive guidance, not a separate comprehensive penal code.
Tehseen S. Poonawalla, 2018	Supreme Court directions on prevention, investigation and remedy in mob violence and lynching cases.	Use its principles and applicable directions where relevant to mob violence; do not present it as a judgment specifically concerning Rajapuram.
Second ARC, 2007 and 2008	Ethics in Governance; Public Order; Capacity Building for Conflict Resolution. The seventh report recommends effective district peace committees, community policing and stronger conflict-resolution capacity.	Supports an institutional response that combines accountable policing with dialogue and public participation. Recommendations are not automatically statutory mandates.

The CRPF question: a necessary distinction

CRPF is a Central Armed Police Force, and its **Rapid Action Force (RAF)** is a specialised component trained for public-order disturbances. The RAF was raised in **1992**. The CRPF's official account records an increase from ten to **15 RAF battalions** following the addition of five units in 2018. Their relevance to Rajapuram is trained response capacity, not a presumption that outside forces are always neutral.

What Rajan can do. Assess the security gap with the SP; document why State capacity may be insufficient; urgently approach the State Government for reinforcement; provide accurate threat and humanitarian information; and coordinate local administration when authorised forces arrive.

What Rajan must not assume. He cannot treat CRPF as his independently requisitionable private command, regard deployment as proof of neutrality, or use armed reinforcement to settle land ownership, political representation or other substantive grievances.

The Ministry of Home Affairs identifies public order and police as State subjects and states that CAPF deployments assist States on request, depending upon security conditions and force availability. Its Police-II Division is responsible for CAPF deployment matters.

Why the highway matters ethically

Dimension	Why reopening matters	How to avoid a new injustice
Consequentialist	Food, medical supplies and emergency access can reduce preventable suffering across the district.	Evaluate the probable consequences of the route operation, including civilian exposure and possible retaliation.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Dimension	Why reopening matters	How to avoid a new injustice
Duty-based	The DM has an obligation to protect life, restore access and enforce lawful order.	Use lawful powers and respect rights even when a faster unlawful shortcut appears attractive.
Justice-based	The highway is a shared public resource and should serve residents irrespective of community.	Maintain objective movement criteria and prevent partisan control of relief consignments.
Care-based	Patients, infants, older persons and displaced families may depend most urgently on restored supplies.	Prioritise critical medical and humanitarian needs without discriminatory eligibility.
Virtue-based	Swift, reasoned action can show courage, compassion and administrative responsibility.	Avoid theatrical enforcement whose principal purpose is to demonstrate toughness or enhance personal reputation.

Relief is a test of neutrality, not a secondary activity

The MHA's revised Guidelines on Communal Harmony direct the administration to avoid discrimination in relief, ensure essential supplies and provide security and facilities in relief camps. Applying these principles in Rajapuram calls for a **common standard of care with individually assessed needs**.

What to verify	What a fair system records
Population and needs	Households, displaced persons, nutrition and medical needs, disability, pregnancy and other vulnerabilities.
Safety	Protection from attack, safe movement, privacy, protection of children and accessible complaint channels.
Material assistance	Food, water, medicines, sanitation, shelter and other requirements delivered against documented need.
Accountability	Delivery records, transparent eligibility, independent spot checks and time-bound grievance correction.
Durable solutions	Safe and voluntary return where possible, or other lawful rehabilitation options, without coercion or discriminatory conditions.

Separate camps are a fact of the case and may be justified as an immediate safety arrangement. They must not become permanent instruments of segregation, unequal citizenship or involuntary displacement.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Land, resources and political representation: the limits of emergency authority

Underlying grievance	What Rajan can initiate	What requires caution
Competing land claims	Protect records and sites, prevent forceful dispossession, organise objective verification and refer substantive disputes to the competent legal forum.	BNSS preventive proceedings are not a substitute for final adjudication of ownership or customary rights.
Uneven resource allocation	Review available district allocations, examine service gaps, publish criteria and correct unlawful or administratively remediable disparities.	Redistribution should respect governing statutes, budgets, eligibility and legitimate consultation.
Inadequate political representation	Ensure meaningful participation in current district processes and convey institutional grievances to competent State authorities.	The DM cannot independently alter elected representation or promise constitutionally unavailable arrangements.
Longstanding distrust	Establish recurring grievance meetings, independent monitoring and documented follow-through on commitments.	A one-time peace agreement does not establish lasting trust without implementation.

How to assess success

Rajan should judge the response by **observable outcomes**, not the number of meetings held or the public acclaim attached to his decisions.

Objective	Practical indicators	Warning sign
Safety	Fewer violent incidents, fewer fresh displacements, timely emergency response.	Apparent calm produced by fear or unreported violence.
Humanitarian protection	Essential supplies, clinical referrals, safe camp conditions and resolved complaints.	Material differences unexplained by assessed need.
Administrative neutrality	Reviewed allegations, reasoned decisions, credible investigators and equal treatment under common rules.	Disproportionate or selective enforcement unsupported by evidence.
Trust	Safe participation, reduced grievances about bias and compliance with verifiable commitments.	Peace meetings attended only by politically influential intermediaries.
Stability	Reliable highway access, continuing services, legally addressed grievances and credible vigilance.	Dependence on indefinite extraordinary security arrangements.

TIER 2 · EXTENDED UNDERSTANDING: THE WHOLE TOPIC AROUND IT

Where the institutional framework helps

1. **MHA communal harmony guidelines:** emphasise sensitive-area assessment, neutral enforcement, credible personnel, peace committees and fair relief.
2. **Second ARC's seventh report:** calls for effective district peace committees, community policing and conflict-resolution training.
3. **AIS Conduct Rules:** make fairness, neutrality, accountability and public interest explicit professional obligations.

Where institutional action can still fail

1. **Selective policing:** even technically lawful measures may lose credibility through biased implementation.
2. **Elite-only dialogue:** a settlement may exclude displaced families and those without influence.
3. **Unreviewed restrictions:** temporary emergency measures can become disproportionate if left in place without reassessment.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

4. **Judicial intervention:** the Supreme Court's 2018 mob-violence directions and 2023 Manipur proceedings show how protection and accountability are connected.
5. **Specialised force capacity:** CRPF and RAF can supplement inadequate local security when deployed through the established process.

4. **Relief without rehabilitation:** camps may remain dependent on continuing assistance while grievances persist.
5. **Security without legitimacy:** temporary order may conceal deepening resentment and reduce cooperation with authorities.

Three official reports that help explain the dilemma

Report and verified date	Relevant institutional emphasis	Application to Rajapuram
Second ARC, Fourth Report Ethics in Governance 12 February 2007	Ethical administration and institutions capable of supporting integrity and accountability.	Neutrality cannot rely on Rajan's personal intentions when his administrative machinery may be compromised.
Second ARC, Fifth Report Public Order: Justice for Each, Peace for All 26 June 2007	Strengthening public-order institutions, police accountability and public-facing policing.	Public safety must be restored through legitimate institutions and credible conduct.
Second ARC, Seventh Report Capacity Building for Conflict Resolution: Friction to Fusion 17 March 2008	Recommends effective District Peace Committees or Integration Councils, community-police contact and enhanced conflict-management capacity.	Use structured dialogue alongside policing and grievance resolution, rather than treating reconciliation as an afterthought.

The Manipur comparison: what can and cannot be inferred

The Manipur experience provides an important parallel for studying **ethnic violence, displacement, security support and humanitarian accountability**. It is evidence that these responsibilities can occur together, not proof that Rajapuram reproduces the same historical causes or legal circumstances.

Verified institutional response	What the record establishes	Teaching relevance
Supreme Court, 7 August 2023	A committee of three former women judges, headed by Justice Gita Mittal, was constituted to examine violence against women and recommend relief, rehabilitation, medical and psychological measures.	Protection and restorative support require independent attention alongside criminal investigation.
MHA relief assistance, 2023-24	**₹247.26 crore** reported as released through three assistance components for camps, rehabilitation and complementary nutrition and hygiene.	A functioning relief response has financial, logistical and monitoring obligations.
MHA relief assistance, 2024-25	**₹349.48 crore** reported as released through the corresponding assistance components.	Displacement needs may persist beyond the first period of emergency response.
Government formation, 4 February 2026	A new Chief Minister and two Deputy Chief Ministers took office after the period of President's Rule.	Political institutions and community reconciliation must be considered together, without assuming that one automatically produces the other.

The five ethical tests for the chosen option

Test	Question Rajan should ask	Application
Legality	Does the competent authority possess and properly exercise the relevant power?	Emergency orders, police operations and CAPF requests must follow their respective legal and administrative channels.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Test	Question Rajan should ask	Application
Necessity	Is the intervention needed to prevent or respond to an identified danger?	Restrictive action must be justified by the actual threat, not collective suspicion.
Proportionality	Is the intervention appropriately limited and capable of review?	Force and restrictions must not exceed the lawful protective purpose.
Fairness	Would the same evidence, vulnerability and rules produce the same decision for the other community?	Relief, enforcement and investigation follow common standards, while differing needs may justify differing assistance.
Accountability	Can the decision be explained, recorded, reviewed and corrected?	Written orders, grievance channels, independent monitoring and timely correction make impartiality verifiable.

The distinction between neutrality, non-partisanship and equity

Neutrality is not indifference to harm. **Non-partisanship** is not passivity before criminal conduct. **Equity** is not arbitrary preference. Their correct application requires Rajan to protect all people while differentiating between victims and offenders, credible threats and unsupported allegations, and actual needs and political demands.

> **Impartial treatment is not identical treatment.** If one camp has more injured residents, it may rightly receive more medical assistance. The ethical requirement is that every camp is assessed using the same transparent principles.

> **Neutrality is not neutrality between law and violence.** A civil servant should be impartial between communities, but must act decisively against violence, unlawful discrimination and abuse of authority, whoever commits them.

The longer transition from peacekeeping to peace-building

In a divided district, public order is a necessary starting point but not a sufficient end state. Durable peace depends upon **credible rule enforcement, grievance resolution, rehabilitated livelihoods, fair access to services and meaningful public participation**. The Second ARC's seventh report recognises the value of both the police and executive magistracy in conflict resolution and recommends expanding their institutional competence for this task.

The administration should therefore connect field-level peace committees with formal legal and grievance mechanisms, train officers in impartial public interaction, maintain records of commitments and prevent powerful intermediaries from monopolising negotiations. This is a proposed governance approach drawing on the Second ARC and MHA guidance, not a claim that all such mechanisms are mandatory statutory bodies.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Two debates worth knowing

Can an outside force restore neutrality?

One view is that CRPF or RAF reinforcement may offer trained capacity and distance from locally entrenched loyalties. The counterargument is that outside forces may be perceived as coercive, lack local relationships and leave the underlying administrative bias untouched. The stronger position is that **external security support is a conditional instrument**: justified when the threat exceeds local capacity, used within lawful authority and combined with accountable local administration and independent scrutiny.

Does peace require justice first, or dialogue first?

One approach insists upon accountability before political engagement, fearing that premature negotiation rewards violence. Another prioritises immediate dialogue to stop further deaths, recognising that communities may not cooperate without reassurance. A defensible response refuses this false sequence: **protect people, investigate offences and open safe dialogue concurrently**. Compromises may address future resource allocation or procedures, but cannot lawfully extinguish victims' rights or grant impunity for serious crimes.

4 Pitfalls and variations

The errors most likely to weaken this case-study answer, the claims that should never be made, and the adjustments needed when the ethical directive changes.

4.1 Six pitfalls, each with its correction

Turning the entire case into a law-and-order problem

~~Requisition CRPF, impose restrictions and arrest troublemakers; peace will follow.~~

Protect lives and restore essential access, but simultaneously address relief, biased institutions, land grievances and representative dialogue.

Confusing an impartial image with impartial action

~~Meet both groups equally and issue a statement that the DM is neutral.~~

Use common legal criteria, evidence-based enforcement, need-based relief and records that permit independent scrutiny.

Failing to compare options

~~Immediately give the ideal action plan without discussing its alternatives.~~

Briefly compare force-first, negotiation-first, reliance on local officials and the integrated strategy; then justify the preferred choice.

Assuming the DM can independently deploy CRPF

~~Rajan should directly order CRPF battalions to take over the district.~~

Rajan should document the security requirement and urgently seek reinforcement through competent State and Union channels.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Equating fairness with identical assistance

~~Give each relief camp exactly the same number of rations and medical teams.~~

Apply common eligibility and service standards, but allocate supplies according to verified population, injury and vulnerability.

Ignoring the structural grievances

~~Once the highway opens and fighting stops, Rajan has solved the case.~~

Stabilisation must lead to lawful land-dispute processes, review of resource allocation, inclusive consultation and mechanisms for correcting institutional bias.

4.2 Never write these

- "Rajan should impose Section 144 of the CrPC under the current criminal-procedure framework."
  BNSS Section 163 is the relevant corresponding urgent-order provision in force from 1 July 2024. Any specific order must satisfy its legal conditions.
- "As District Magistrate, Rajan can unilaterally requisition and command CRPF battalions."
  CAPF assistance to States operates through State and Union deployment arrangements, not unilateral district command.
- "Both communities must receive identical relief, irrespective of their population and need."
  Equality of standards requires objective assessment, not identical quantities in unequal circumstances.
- "For neutrality, the DM must avoid taking action against members of either group."
  Impartiality requires lawful action against proven wrongdoing regardless of identity, not inaction.
- "Every police officer belonging to either community must be transferred."
  Community identity is not evidence of misconduct; review actual conduct and act through competent authority.
- "A neighbouring country is funding the Rajapuram violence."
  The case establishes a possibility of external exploitation, not an intelligence finding or proven foreign involvement.
- "CRPF deployment automatically ends ethnic conflict."
  Security reinforcement can help protect civilians but cannot resolve land claims, political representation or distrust by itself.
- "Rajan can immediately settle ownership of disputed lands and allocate political representation by executive order."
  Land titles and representative arrangements are governed by applicable legal and institutional procedures beyond the DM's general emergency powers.
- "Peace negotiations should include blanket forgiveness of all offences."
  Political or community reconciliation does not authorise unlawful impunity for serious violence.
- "The Second ARC recommendations are binding criminal-law provisions."
  They are administrative reform recommendations. Applicable statutory law, service rules and executive instructions must be distinguished.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

4.3 If the question changes

If it asks	The structure becomes	What must change
Examine the ethical challenges of deploying CRPF in communal violence	Security need; potential benefits; legal authority; human-rights risks; safeguards; judgement.	Concentrate on force deployment rather than the full Rajapuram conflict.
Discuss the role of impartiality and non-partisanship	Meaning of each value; institutional challenges; conduct rules; practical applications; public trust.	Shift from an options-based case study to a values-based analytical answer.
As DM, prepare an action plan for restoring peace	Immediate protection; highway access and law enforcement; administrative integrity; dialogue; grievance resolution; monitoring.	Expand operational sequencing, responsibilities and measurable outcomes.
Critically evaluate the use of preventive restrictions	Grounds for restriction; legal powers; public-safety benefits; rights and proportionality; review and alternatives.	Put BNSS Section 163 and safeguards against overreach at the centre.
How can administrative trust be rebuilt after ethnic violence?	Sources of distrust; fair policing and relief; accountability; inclusive participation; long-term institutional reforms.	Reduce the discussion of tactical security and deepen procedural justice and reconciliation.
What if the administration were impartial but the communities remained hostile?	Ethical issues; safety options; representative dialogue; resource and land dispute mechanisms; continued oversight.	Do not invent administrative bias; respond to the altered facts.
What if the violence had stopped but displacement continued?	Protection and dignity; rehabilitation options; legal claims; voluntary return; livelihood restoration; reconciliation.	Make durable solutions and humanitarian equity the principal demand.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

5

The model answer

One model answer in the UPSC Gurus house range of 250 to 253 words: **252 words exactly**, counting every whitespace-separated token inside the answer sheet, including section numerals, part headings and point labels. UPSC's printed limit is 250 words. The answer follows (a) and (b) in order, identifies five ethical issues, compares three alternatives, selects a coordinated response and closes with the distinction between apparent and substantive neutrality. The introduction addresses the whole case; the conclusion establishes the governing ethical principle.

Model answer ## Ethical issues, options and a justified choice

252 words

Rajan faces intertwined crises: ethnic violence threatens life, while partisan administration destroys trust. Restoring order must uphold constitutional equality, humanitarian duties and credible reconciliation.

1. (a) Ethical issues

- **Life and dignity:** Protect both communities, including displaced families, especially children, women and older persons; provide safe camps, food, healthcare and emergency access.
- **Impartiality:** Biased police compromise equal protection, fair investigation and public confidence.
- **Justice:** Disputed land, uneven resources and weak representation demand transparent, lawful grievance resolution.
- **Public order:** Reopening the highway must avoid indiscriminate force and disproportionate restrictions.
- **Security:** Prevent possible cross-border exploitation without stereotyping either community or presenting suspicion as proof.

2. (b) Options and preferred choice

- **CRPF-first:** Can deter violence, but excessive force risks deepening alienation.
- **Talks-first:** May reduce hostility, but cannot replace urgent protection.
- **Local-police-only:** Offers speed, but entrenched bias undermines legitimacy.
- **Preferred, integrated response:** Secure relief camps and reopen the highway through carefully planned, risk-assessed, protected supply movement. Request CRPF or RAF reinforcement through competent State and Union channels if local capacity proves inadequate; enforce minimum necessary force.
- **Restore credibility:** Review partisan conduct, seek authorised personnel changes, investigate violence independently and publish transparent, verifiable need-based relief criteria.
- **Reconcile:** Convene inclusive Jhara-Biru talks, protect victims, verify land claims, review resource allocations and refer representation grievances to competent authorities.

3. Demonstrating genuine neutrality

Apply identical legal standards, differentiated help according to need, transparent decisions and accessible complaints. Monitor outcomes across both communities.

Rajan's impartiality must be visible in protected lives, lawful enforcement and fair remedies, not merely proclaimed through symbolic gestures.

DEMAND
Discuss the five ethical issues in Rajapuram, compare Rajan's available options and justify the preferred choice without compromising ethics

HIDDEN DEMAND
Neutrality cannot be established by appearances when institutions are partisan; it must be demonstrated through equal protection, fair procedures and accountability

STRUCTURE
About two-fifths on (a) ethical issues, half on (b) options and preferred choice, and a short final part on demonstrable neutrality

BALANCE
Introduction 24 words, conclusion 19 words; 252 words in all

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

Why it works: The introduction identifies Rajan's dual responsibility for human security and institutional legitimacy. Part (a) covers protection of life, administrative impartiality, distributive justice, public order and possible external interference. Part (b) compares CRPF-first, talks-first and local-police-only approaches before selecting a coordinated response. It prioritises humanitarian access, recognises the lawful channels for CAPF reinforcement, corrects institutional bias and addresses the structural grievances of both communities. The final part answers the hidden demand by distinguishing **equal legal standards from identical quantities of assistance**. The conclusion establishes that non-partisanship is demonstrated through decisions, their implementation and their consequences.

6 Other ways to write it

The model answer above remains the recommended answer. These alternative outlines show how the same ethical judgement can be expressed through different forms without changing the question's two-part demand or neglecting the hidden test of neutrality.

Approach	How it is built	When it works
Ethical principles and decision matrix	Introduction; (a) life, justice, neutrality, compassion and proportionality; (b) a three-column comparison of options, benefits and risks; selected response; demonstrable neutrality; conclusion.	When you want every ethical principle linked to an identifiable administrative choice.
Immediate, short-term and long-term response	(a) Ethical issues; (b) compare force-first, dialogue-first and an integrated response; then organise the preferred choice into immediate protection, short-term institutional correction and long-term reconciliation.	When operational sequencing is your strongest skill. Comparison of alternatives must precede the action plan.
Stakeholder-centred answer	(a) Duties towards victims, both communities, officials and the wider public; (b) compare options using those stakeholder interests; select measures protecting everyone under common rules.	When the question involves several groups whose rights, expectations and vulnerabilities differ.
Constitutional and administrative ethics	(a) Article 14, Article 21, integrity, non-partisanship and distributive justice; (b) options assessed for legality, proportionality, fairness and effectiveness; integrated decision.	When a concise legal-ethical framework helps make the decision rigorous.
Conflict-transformation approach	(a) Immediate harms and structural grievances; (b) compare coercive, conciliatory and integrated options; combine protection, accountable institutions, inclusive negotiation and grievance settlement.	When the distinction between stopping violence and building durable peace deserves emphasis.
Open with the Second ARC	Introduce the administrative need to combine public order with conflict-resolution capacity; then address (a) and (b), using the Second ARC's seventh report to support peace committees and public participation.	When a relevant institutional reference can strengthen the ethical framework without overwhelming the case facts.

The strongest alternative opening. A District Magistrate confronting ethnic violence must restore both **public security and the legitimacy of the State**. Force can create space for dialogue, but only demonstrably fair administration can make that space sustainable.

The strongest alternative closing. Rajan should neither substitute force for justice nor substitute negotiation for protection. **Equal protection, lawful restraint and transparent grievance resolution** provide the foundation for lasting peace.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

7 Quick recall and Prelims crossover

Sixteen facts, legal provisions and institutional references to carry into questions on ethics in administration, conflict resolution, communal harmony and internal security.

1. **Articles 14 and 21:** equality before law and equal protection of laws; protection of life and personal liberty.
2. **Article 355:** Union's duty to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance and ensure constitutional government.
3. **State List:** Entry **1**, public order; Entry **2**, police, subject to the constitutional distribution of powers.
4. **BNSS Section 148:** dispersal of an assembly through civil force, within statutory conditions.
5. **BNSS Section 163:** urgent orders concerning nuisance or apprehended danger; BNSS enforced from **1 July 2024**.
6. **BNSS Section 164:** procedure for disputes concerning land or water likely to cause a breach of peace.
7. **AIS Conduct Rules, 1968:** Rule 3(1A), inserted in **2014**, requires political neutrality, merit, fairness, impartiality, accountability and responsiveness.
8. **MHA Guidelines on Communal Harmony:** revised guidelines circulated with the Home Secretary's letter dated **23 June 2008**.
9. **Rapid Action Force:** specialised CRPF unit raised in **October 1992** for riots and public disturbances.
10. **CAPF deployment:** assistance to States on request; dependent upon security requirements and force availability, according to MHA.
11. **Second ARC, Fourth Report:** Ethics in Governance, **12 February 2007**.
12. **Second ARC, Fifth Report:** Public Order: Justice for Each, Peace for All, **26 June 2007**.
13. **Second ARC, Seventh Report:** Capacity Building for Conflict Resolution, **17 March 2008**.
14. **Tehseen S. Poonawalla:** Supreme Court judgment of **17 July 2018**; preventive, remedial and punitive directions against lynching and mob violence.
15. **Manipur proceedings:** Supreme Court constituted a **three-member** committee of former women judges on **7 August 2023**, headed by Justice Gita Mittal.
16. **Manipur special relief assistance:** MHA reports **₹247.26 crore** for 2023-24 and **₹349.48 crore** for 2024-25 under specified relief components.

THE ONE SENTENCE TO CARRY OUT OF THIS DOCUMENT

In a divided district, a District Magistrate establishes neutrality not by remaining equally distant from suffering and wrongdoing, but by ensuring equal protection, fair procedures and accountable action for everyone.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

8 Write it yourself

Write the Rajapuram answer in 250 words without looking back. Address (a) and (b) in the given order, then assess your response against these seven checks.

	Check	Yes / No
1	Does the introduction recognise **both the immediate threat to life and the crisis of institutional trust**?	
2	Does Part (a) identify the ethical issues of **humanitarian protection, impartiality, justice, public order and security**, connecting each to Rajapuram?	
3	Does Part (b) **compare actual alternatives**, including CRPF reinforcement, peace talks and reliance on compromised local institutions?	
4	Does the preferred approach explicitly prioritise **highway access and supplies** while respecting lawful force-deployment channels, necessity and proportionality?	
5	Does the response correct **administrative and police bias** while initiating inclusive talks and fair processes for land, resources and representation?	
6	Does the final part explain how **objective standards, need-based protection and accountability** establish neutrality beyond public appearances?	
7	Is the answer approximately **250 words**, with a definite choice, a balanced conclusion and none of the inaccurate claims in section 4.2?	

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- **Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice:** Constitution of India, Articles 14, 21 and 355 and the Seventh Schedule, including State List Entries 1 and 2. legislative.gov.in
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- **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Second Administrative Reforms Commission:** Fourth Report, *Ethics in Governance*, submitted 12 February 2007, darpg.gov.in; Fifth Report, *Public Order: Justice for Each, Peace for All*, submitted 26 June 2007, darpg.gov.in; Seventh Report, *Capacity Building for Conflict Resolution: Friction to Fusion*, submitted 17 March 2008, with the Government's recorded decisions on the recommendations, darpg.gov.in. Submission dates are recorded in DARPG's official list of Second ARC milestones, darpg.gov.in.
- **Supreme Court of India:** *Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India*, W.P. (Civil) No. 754 of 2016 and connected matters, judgment dated 17 July 2018, bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud. Preventive, remedial and punitive measures against lynching and mob violence. Full judgment reproduced at indiankanoon.org.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

- **Supreme Court of India:** *Dinganglung Gangmei v. Mutum Churamani Meetei and connected proceedings*, 2023 INSC 698, judgment dated 7 August 2023. Bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. Committee of Justice Gita Mittal, Justice Shalini Phansalkar Joshi and Justice Asha Menon; directions concerning survivors, investigations, relief and rehabilitation. Full judgment reproduced at indiankanoon.org.
- **Ministry of Home Affairs:** Annual Report 2023-24, paragraph 7.82, describing CAPF deployment to assist States and Union Territories on request, subject to security requirements and force availability. mha.gov.in. Police-II Division's official allocation of functions, including CAPF deployment. mha.gov.in.
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- **Ministry of Home Affairs:** Relief and Rehabilitation of Persons Displaced Due to Disruption of Public Order in North East States. Itemised special assistance released to Manipur: ₹247.26 crore in FY 2023-24 and ₹349.48 crore in FY 2024-25 under relief camps, rehabilitation, and complementary nutrition and hygiene support. mha.gov.in
- **Government of Manipur and Press Information Bureau:** Manipur Gazette notification dated 4 February 2026 on the appointment and oath of Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, egazettemanipur.mn.gov.in; Prime Minister's Office press release of 4 February 2026 confirming the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Ministers Nemcha Kipgen and Losii Dikho, pib.gov.in.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues that need to be addressed in this case.
(b) What are the options open to Rajan? Which option would ensure protection of his non-partisan image without compromising ethics?

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2 Self-check this answer with section 8

3 Have the paper evaluated

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