GENERAL STUDIES II

50th PRAGATI Meeting: Digital Governance & Federalism for UPSC

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The 50th PRAGATI Meeting marks a significant milestone in India's technology-enabled governance and infrastructure monitoring. Launched in 2015, PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) promotes administrative accountability, transparency, cooperative federalism and timely project implementation. This comprehensive UPSC-focused article examines its key features, reported achievements, major infrastructure projects, constitutional significance, governance challenges and previous year questions from UPSC Prelims and Mains. Essential reading for GS Paper II, governance and current affairs preparation.

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UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS | GS PAPER II | POLITY & GOVERNANCE
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1. Why Is the 50th PRAGATI Meeting Important?

A comprehensive UPSC and State PCS guide to the 50th PRAGATI Meeting, key governance features, projects discussed, challenges and previous year questions.

The 50th meeting of PRAGATI represents a milestone in India's efforts to strengthen technology-enabled, accountable and outcome-oriented governance.

PRAGATI stands for **Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.**

Launched in 2015, PRAGATI integrates accountability, transparency and timely decision-making into administrative processes.

It enables high-level review of major projects and coordination between Union ministries and State administrations.

> **UPSC Relevance:** Governance, accountability, transparency, e-governance, cooperative federalism, Centre–State relations and infrastructure.

2. What Is the PRAGATI Platform?

PRAGATI is a multi-purpose and multi-modal technology-enabled governance platform designed to support administrative coordination and project monitoring.

Main Objectives

- Improve timely project implementation.
- Promote administrative accountability.
- Strengthen transparency in monitoring.
- Resolve coordination bottlenecks.
- Encourage Union–State cooperation.
- Reduce avoidable project delays.
- Improve implementation outcomes.

> **Core Idea:** PRAGATI connects digital monitoring with administrative leadership and coordinated problem-solving.

3. Key Features of PRAGATI

Prime Minister-Led Review

Review meetings are chaired by the Prime Minister.

Team India Spirit

Encourages Union and State authorities to work together.

Technology-Enabled Monitoring

Facilitates review of project implementation challenges.

Administrative Accountability

Encourages responsible authorities to address pending issues.

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Cross-Department Coordination

Helps departments overcome administrative silos.

Timely Decision-Making

Supports coordinated action on implementation bottlenecks.

4. Important Governance Tools

The supplied study material identifies the following tools in the broader PRAGATI governance context.

Tool	Primary Function
PM Gati Shakti	Integrated infrastructure planning and coordination.
PARIVESH	Digital environmental and related clearance processes.
PM Reference Portal	Administrative reference and follow-up processes.

5. PRAGATI and Cooperative Federalism

Cooperative federalism means collaboration between different levels of government to achieve shared national and development objectives.

PRAGATI encourages the Union Government and State administrations to work collectively on project implementation.

How PRAGATI Supports Cooperative Federalism

- Direct communication between senior officials.
- Joint resolution of implementation issues.
- Improved Centre–State coordination.
- Reduction of departmental fragmentation.
- Shared responsibility for project outcomes.
- More effective intergovernmental dialogue.

> **GS Paper II Value Addition:** PRAGATI can be used as an example of practical cooperative federalism through institutional coordination and joint problem-solving.

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6. Reported Achievements of PRAGATI

According to the supplied current-affairs material, PRAGATI has recorded the following milestones.

2015

Launch Year

Beginning of the PRAGATI governance platform.

~500

Senior Officials

Reported participation by Government of India Secretaries and State Chief Secretaries since inception.

~94%

Issue Resolution

Reported resolution of identified project-related issues.

> **Exam Note:** The reported 94% figure concerns identified issues resolved. It does not mean 94% of all monitored projects were completed.

7. Major Infrastructure Projects

A. Jammu–Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla Rail Link

- Major railway connectivity project.
- Located in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The supplied material identifies 1994 as the approval year.
- It records commissioning in 2025.
- Illustrates long-term infrastructure coordination.

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B. Navi Mumbai International Airport

- Major aviation infrastructure development.
- Involves coordination across multiple authorities.
- Highlights the importance of project monitoring.

C. Bogibeel Rail-cum-Road Bridge

- Located over the Brahmaputra River.
- Combines railway and road connectivity.
- Illustrates complex infrastructure implementation.

8. Global Recognition of PRAGATI

According to the supplied material, an external study by Oxford University's Saïd Business School described PRAGATI as a global benchmark for real-time project monitoring.

It reportedly characterised PRAGATI as a **"single source of truth"** for monitoring project information.

Governance Significance

- Shared visibility of project information.
- Better administrative coordination.
- Improved tracking of pending issues.
- Greater focus on implementation outcomes.
- Potential reduction in information fragmentation.

9. Constitutional and Socio-Economic Significance

Constitutional and Governance Impact

- Strengthens cooperative federalism.
- Promotes intergovernmental coordination.
- Encourages administrative accountability.
- Supports transparent monitoring.
- Improves implementation-focused governance.

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Socio-Economic Impact

- Timely infrastructure can improve connectivity.
- Reduced delays can limit avoidable costs.
- Better coordination can improve public service delivery.
- Infrastructure development can support regional growth.
- Effective implementation can improve development outcomes.

10. Challenges and Way Forward

Potential Challenges

- Accuracy and timeliness of project data.
- Coordination across multiple departments.
- Different administrative capacities across States.
- Risk of excessive dependence on centralised review.
- Balancing speed with environmental safeguards.
- Evaluating actual outcomes beyond issue closure.

Way Forward

- Strengthen monitoring indicators.
- Improve digital interoperability.
- Build administrative capacity.
- Encourage timely follow-up.
- Maintain environmental and social safeguards.
- Assess long-term project outcomes.

11. Quick Revision for UPSC Prelims

Topic	Important Fact
Full Form	Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation
Launch Year	2015
Nature	Multi-purpose, multi-modal governance platform
Review Chairperson	Prime Minister
Key Principle	Team India Spirit

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Topic	Important Fact
Federal Dimension	Cooperative federalism
Major Focus	Accountability, transparency and timely implementation
Reported Issue Resolution	Approximately 94%

12. How to Use PRAGATI in UPSC Mains Answers

GS Paper II – Governance

Use PRAGATI as an illustration of technology-enabled monitoring, administrative accountability and interdepartmental coordination.

GS Paper II – Federalism

Explain how coordinated reviews can support cooperation between Union and State administrations.

GS Paper III – Infrastructure

Discuss the importance of timely project implementation, coordination and reduction of avoidable delays.

> **Answer-Writing Structure:** Introduction ? Governance problem ? Role of PRAGATI ? Benefits ? Challenges ? Way forward ? Conclusion.

13. Conclusion

The 50th PRAGATI meeting highlights the importance of combining digital governance, administrative leadership and cooperative federalism.

PRAGATI demonstrates how coordinated monitoring can support timely implementation and improve administrative problem-solving.

> **Final UPSC Takeaway:** Effective governance depends not only on policy formulation but also on accountability, coordination, timely implementation and measurable public outcomes.

14. UPSC Previous Year Questions: 6 PYQs with Answers and Explanations

The following six previous year questions cover digital governance, cooperative federalism and Centre–State relations. These topics are closely connected with the PRAGATI platform.

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Important: These are UPSC PYQs on related themes, not questions directly naming PRAGATI. Question wording is paraphrased for study purposes. Mains answers below are suggested educational answers, not official UPSC answer keys.

PYQ 1 | PRELIMS 2018

Digital India Programme

Which of the following statements describe the aims of the Digital India Plan?

1. Creating India's own internet companies on the Chinese model.
2. Encouraging foreign big-data companies to establish data centres in India through a dedicated policy framework.
3. Connecting villages to the internet and extending Wi-Fi access to schools and public places.

Options:

(A) 1 and 2 only
(B) 3 only
(C) 2 and 3 only
(D) 1, 2 and 3

View Correct Answer and Detailed Explanation

Correct Answer: (B) 3 only

Statement 1: Incorrect.

Digital India was not designed specifically to create Indian internet companies on the Chinese model.

Statement 2: Incorrect.

The stated aims did not include the particular policy described in this statement.

Statement 3: Correct.

Expanding digital connectivity and access to digital infrastructure is an important objective of Digital India.

Connection with PRAGATI:

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Digital India focuses on broad digital transformation, while PRAGATI focuses on high-level administrative review and implementation monitoring.

PYQ 2 | MAINS 2024

E-Governance and Accountability

GS Paper II

E-governance is more than applying digital technology to routine service delivery. Evaluate the Interactive Service Model in promoting transparency and accountability.

View Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Effective e-governance requires interactive communication, accountability and citizen-oriented administration, not merely digitalisation of existing processes.

Introduction:

E-governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies to improve government processes and public services.

Key Dimensions:

- Transparency through accessible government information.
- Accountability through tracking and review mechanisms.
- Interactive communication between authorities and stakeholders.
- Improved grievance redressal and administrative responsiveness.
- Reduced information gaps and procedural delays.

Challenges:

- Digital divide and accessibility barriers.
- Weak feedback mechanisms.
- Inadequate digital literacy.
- Cybersecurity and privacy concerns.

PRAGATI Link:

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PRAGATI demonstrates technology-enabled interaction among senior administrators. It is an example of government coordination, although it should not be confused with a citizen-facing service-delivery model.

Conclusion:

E-governance succeeds when technology improves transparency, participation, responsiveness and accountability.

PYQ 3 | MAINS 2024

Centre–State Relations and Federalism

GS Paper II

Examine recent changes in Centre–State relations and suggest measures to strengthen trust and federalism in India.

View Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Indian federalism requires constitutional autonomy, intergovernmental consultation and cooperative decision-making.

Introduction:

India's federal system distributes powers between the Union and States while maintaining a strong national framework.

Important Issues:

- Fiscal relations and resource distribution.
- Consultation in policy implementation.
- Role of Governors.
- Administrative coordination.
- Political differences between governments.

Measures to Build Trust:

- Strengthen institutional dialogue.
- Respect constitutional distribution of powers.

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- Improve fiscal consultation.
- Encourage joint implementation reviews.
- Promote transparent dispute resolution.

PRAGATI Link:

PRAGATI offers an example of Union–State administrative coordination for resolving project-related issues.

Conclusion:

Cooperative federalism works best when consultation, trust and constitutional autonomy reinforce one another.

PYQ 4 | MAINS 2023

101st Constitutional Amendment and Federalism

GS Paper II

Explain the significance of the 101st Constitutional Amendment and assess how it reflects the accommodative spirit of federalism.

View Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** The 101st Constitutional Amendment introduced the constitutional framework for GST and created a major mechanism for shared fiscal decision-making.

Key Provisions:

- Article 246A provides special legislative powers relating to GST.
- Article 269A deals with GST on inter-State supplies.
- Article 279A establishes the GST Council.

Federal Significance:

- Joint participation of Union and States.
- Institutionalised fiscal consultation.
- Scope for negotiated tax policy.

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- Shared responsibility for implementation.

Limitations:

- Differences over fiscal autonomy.
- Disputes over revenue sharing.
- Unequal bargaining capacities.

PRAGATI Link:

Both the GST Council and PRAGATI illustrate intergovernmental coordination, but their legal character differs.

The GST Council is a constitutional body. PRAGATI is an administrative governance mechanism.

Conclusion:

The amendment illustrates cooperative federalism through institutionalised consultation on indirect taxation.

PYQ 5 | MAINS 2020

Cooperation, Competition and Confrontation

GS Paper II

How have cooperation, competition and confrontation shaped the nature of Indian federalism? Explain with examples.

View Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Indian federalism operates through cooperative, competitive and occasionally confrontational relations between governments.

Cooperation:

- Joint policy implementation.
- Intergovernmental consultation.
- Coordination in infrastructure projects.
- Institutions such as the GST Council.

Competition:

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- Competition for investment.
- Improving ease of doing business.
- Innovation in public service delivery.
- Improved administrative performance.

Confrontation:

- Disputes over legislative powers.
- Fiscal disagreements.
- Political and administrative conflicts.
- Inter-State disputes.

PRAGATI Link:

PRAGATI is an illustration of the cooperative dimension, as it promotes joint problem-solving between Union and State authorities.

Conclusion:

Healthy federalism requires cooperation alongside constructive competition, while resolving confrontation through constitutional mechanisms.

PYQ | 15 MARKS 2015

Cooperative Federalism

GS Paper II | 12.5 Marks

Highlight the shortcomings in India's existing federal structure and examine the extent to which cooperative federalism can address these limitations.

View Suggested Answer and Explanation

> **Core Answer:** Cooperative federalism encourages the Union and States to work as partners in achieving shared development goals.

Introduction:

India has a federal constitutional structure with a comparatively strong Union Government.

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Existing Shortcomings:

- Fiscal imbalances between Union and States.
- Administrative coordination challenges.
- Centralised decision-making in some areas.
- Political disagreements.
- Unequal institutional capacities.

Role of Cooperative Federalism:

- Encourages policy consultation.
- Improves joint implementation.
- Strengthens intergovernmental trust.
- Supports coordinated development planning.
- Promotes shared accountability.

PRAGATI Link:

Launched in 2015, PRAGATI offers a relevant example of administrative coordination between Union and State authorities.

Critical Analysis:

Cooperative mechanisms can improve coordination, but cannot independently remove constitutional, fiscal or political disagreements.

Conclusion:

Effective cooperative federalism requires institutional dialogue, constitutional respect, fiscal fairness and shared responsibility.

UPSC PYQ Revision Summary

- **2018 Prelims:** Digital India – Correct answer: Option B (3 only).
- **2024 Mains:** Interactive Service Model of e-governance.
- **2024 Mains:** Centre–State relations and federal trust.
- **2023 Mains:** 101st Constitutional Amendment and federalism.
- **2020 Mains:** Cooperation, competition and confrontation.

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- **2015 Mains:** Cooperative federalism and structural shortcomings.

Examination Strategy: For Prelims, focus on factual distinctions between government initiatives. For Mains, connect PRAGATI with cooperative federalism, administrative accountability and technology-enabled project monitoring.

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