

Union Public Service Commission Conducts Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination-2026 at 2,072 Venues Across 83 Cities Nationwide

A Slew of Technological Measures, Including Real-Time Face Authentication Introduced for the First Time to Ensure Integrity of the Examination Process, Says UPSC Chairman Dr. Ajay Kumar

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The Union Public Service Commission conducted the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2026, including the Indian Forest Service (Preliminary) Examination 2026, today, i.e., 24 May 2026, at 2,072 examination venues in 83 examination centres (cities) across the country. Out of a total of 8,19,732 candidates who had applied for the examination, nearly 5.49 lakh candidates, that is around 67 per cent, appeared for the examination, as per provisional data. In comparison, in the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2025, out of a total of nearly 9.5 lakh candidates who had applied for the examination, approximately 61 per cent, that is around 5.8 lakh candidates, had appeared for the examination.

This year, the Commission introduced real-time face authentication of candidates at examination venues, for the first time, to prevent impersonation and strengthen the integrity of the examination process. The indigenously developed system through NeGD of MeitY worked perfectly across all 2,072 Venues. This was possibly the largest real-time face-authentication conducted by UPSC and its 100% success was a major step forward in integrity processes of the Commission.

Expressing satisfaction over the smooth conduct of the examination, UPSC Chairman, Dr. Ajay Kumar said, "I am extremely happy with the efforts of the entire team of UPSC along with NeGD (National e-Governance Division) and NIC (National Informatics Centre) who worked tirelessly towards the implementation this examination. Moreover, the implementation of the face authentication protocol was perhaps one of the most complex operational exercises, and its smooth execution is a matter of great satisfaction."

The examination was held in two mandatory sessions, commencing with General Studies (Paper-I) from 09:30 AM to 11:30 AM in the forenoon session, followed by the Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) [Paper-II] from 02:30 PM to 04:30 PM in the afternoon session, in strict compliance with the prescribed institutional guidelines and examination protocols.

Among the highly crowded centres, Delhi centre recorded the highest application with 70,885 candidates across 144 venues, followed by Hyderabad centre with 44,209 candidates at 100 venues, while Patna centre recorded 39,147 candidates across 79 venues. On the other hand, Kargil recorded the least number of candidates application with 98 candidates across one venue, followed by Port Blair with 270 candidates at one venue, while Leh (Ladakh) recorded 308 candidates across two venues.

All examination venues were equipped with necessary facilities and arrangements for the convenience of candidates. Adequate measures relating to drinking water, power backup, medical assistance, shaded waiting areas, sanitation facilities and accessibility support for PwBD candidates were ensured at all centres in view of the prevailing weather conditions in several parts of the country. Deployment of trained invigilatory staff and security personnel was also ensured at all centres for the orderly conduct of the examination. Mobile signal jammers were also deployed at all examination venues to ensure the fair and secure conduct of the examination.

In an effort to decongest examination centres, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), this year, has added three new examination centres at Bhubaneswar, Kanpur, and Meerut. The commission has also introduced a dropdown option enabling candidates to indicate their preferred nearby cities. The data collected through this exercise will serve as a survey of candidate preferences and help identify feasible locations for establishing additional examination centres in the future.

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance transparency in the examination process, the UPSC will, for the first time, release the Provisional answer key soon after the completion of the examination. The Commission will initially publish a provisional answer key and invite representations, if any, from candidates until 6:00 PM on the seventh day from the date of the examination, i.e till May 31st 2026. All representations received will be carefully examined, along with the supporting documents submitted by candidates, before recording a considered view on the correctness of the answer key for the concerned questions.

The final answer key, however, will be released only after the declaration of the final result of the Civil Services Examination - 2026, in accordance with the Commission's existing practice.

Out of a total candidates who had applied for the examination, 11,224 candidates belonged to the categories of Persons with Benchmark Disability (PwBD) (disability of 40 per cent or more) and Persons with Disability (PwD) (disability of less than 40 per cent). Persons with Benchmark Disability in the category of blindness, locomotors disability (both arm affected-BA) and cerebral palsy were given Compensatory Time of twenty minutes per hour i.e. 40 minutes in each session. Candidates with other disabilities and the persons having less than 40% disability and having difficulty in writing were also given Compensatory Time subject to production of a Medical Certificate to the effect that they are having difficulty in writing.

The Commission noted that the successful conduct of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination-2026 and Indian Forest Service (Preliminary) Examination- 2026 reflects the combined efforts of multiple stakeholders and the continued strengthening of institutional mechanisms aimed at ensuring fairness, efficiency and credibility in the examination system.

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