UPSC Mains practice – reference note

GS-IV · 22-11-2026 · 20 marks · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/upsc-mains-practice/2026-11-22-whistle-blowing-loyalty-public-interest

Case study. On 27 November 2003, Satyendra Dubey, an engineer with the National Highways Authority of India, was murdered after he wrote to the Prime Minister's Office about corruption in a highway project. Twenty-three years later, Arul, an Assistant Executive Engineer in a State highways division, is asked to certify the final bill of a ₹12 crore road-widening work. Core-sample test reports in the file show the bituminous layer to be about 30% thinner than what has been measured and billed. The bills are already initialled by his Executive Engineer, and the contractor is known to be close to a local politician. When Arul raises the issue informally, the Executive Engineer tells him, "Everyone signs; if you make noise, you will be transferred." His family fears for his safety. The payment is due in a week. (a) Identify the ethical issues involved. (b) Evaluate the options available to Arul. (c) What course of action should he adopt, and what protection does the law offer him? (20 marks, 250 words)

1. Key facts to quote

Fact	Detail
Satyendra Dubey	NHAI engineer murdered at Gaya on 27 November 2003 after complaining to the PMO about corruption in a highway project
PIDPI Resolution (April 2004)	Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers – the CVC designated to receive complaints about Central Government bodies, with identity kept secret
S. Manjunath	Indian Oil officer murdered on 19 November 2005 in Uttar Pradesh after acting against fuel adulteration
Second ARC, 4th Report "Ethics in Governance" (2007)	Recommended a law to protect whistle-blowers
Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014	Notified on 12 May 2014; comes into force on a date the Centre notifies – Government reply in Parliament (December 2024): not yet notified
Whistle Blowers Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2015	Passed by the Lok Sabha on 13 May 2015; lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha
Companies Act, 2013 – Section 177	Vigil mechanism for directors and employees of listed and certain other companies

2. Tamil Nadu angle

Tamil Nadu fact	Detail
Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC)	Investigates corruption by State public servants under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988
Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Act, 2018	Lokayukta for complaints of corruption against public servants in the State
Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Act, 1998	Rules for open, fair tendering in public procurement
Tamil Nadu Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1973	Duty of integrity; limits on statements to the press without permission

3. Static links

- GS-IV: integrity, impartiality, courage of conviction; probity in governance; ethical dilemmas in public institutions; laws and rules as sources of ethical guidance.
- GS-II: transparency and accountability; role of the CVC, Lokpal and Lokayuktas.
- Thinkers: the Nolan Committee's Seven Principles of Public Life (UK, 1995) – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership.

4. Common mistakes

- Writing that the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 is in force – the Government says it has not been brought into force.
- Recommending leaks to the media as the first step – it ignores proper channels and conduct rules.
- Treating loyalty to a superior as the highest duty; the Constitution and public interest come first.

Official sources

- Central Vigilance Commission – PIDPI (Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers) complaints – https://cvc.gov.in/
- Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 (India Code) – https://www.indiacode.nic.in/
- Second Administrative Reforms Commission – 4th Report, Ethics in Governance (DARPG) – https://darpg.gov.in/
- Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, Government of Tamil Nadu – https://dvac.tn.gov.in/

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