

1. Does the decision of the union government to convert Jammu & Kashmir into a union territory and carve out Ladakh as a separate union territory augur well with the constitutional principles? Examine.

Introduction

Recently, the government of India has repealed Article 370 of the Constitution which used to give autonomous status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir under Part XXI of the Constitution. After revocation of Article 370 Jammu & Kashmir is divided into two Union Territories, one of Jammu and Kashmir with legislative assembly and another of Ladakh without legislative assembly.

Body

Abrogation of Article 370 augur well with the Constitutional Principles

- **Equality** Article 35A which stems from Article 370 empowers the Jammu and Kashmir legislature to define the permanent resident of the state, and their special rights and privileges. Now the Presidential order, The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019, has scrapped Article 370 and treated the people of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state equally with the other states by extending all provisions of the Constitution of India to Jammu and Kashmir including single citizenship and Fundamental Rights.
- **Integration** With the removal of the 1954 order, which had included a proviso to Article 3, namely that “no Bill providing for increasing or diminishing the area of the State of Jammu and Kashmir or altering the name or boundary of that State shall be introduced in the parliament without the consent of the Legislature of that State” the power of the Legislature ceases to exist and Parliamentary Laws, including that of reservation and Emergency would apply to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as it does in other parts of the country. Hence the end of ‘Positive discrimination’.
- **Federalism**
Now the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir has a federal relation with the Centre like the federal relation between other states and the centre. Eg. In case of inconsistencies between laws made by Parliament and laws made by the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, earlier law shall prevail and law made by the Legislative Assembly shall be void.
- **Sovereignty**
With the introduction of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Bill 2019 ending special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, now the Union Territories will be administered by the President, through an administrator appointed as Lieutenant Governor. And the High court of Jammu and Kashmir will be the common High court for both Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Abrogation of Article 370 doesn't augur well with the Constitutional Principles

1. The reduction of the state to union territory will give a fillip to the concept of Constitution being more unitary.
2. The entire exercise of getting Article 370 of the Constitution effectively abrogated has been marked by executive excess. Since Article 370 has been used to amend Article 367(which deals with the interpretation) in respect of Jammu and Kashmir , and this amendment has been used to amend Article 370 itself. This whole has been done through a Presidential Order when Governor rule was going on in the valley.
3. The passing of legislation as far-reaching as dismembering a State without prior consultation has set a new low.
4. A purported process to change the Constitutional status of a sensitive border State has been achieved without any legislative input or representative contribution from its people.

Conclusion

The special status of Jammu and Kashmir was meant to end, but only with the concurrence of its people. The significant move, in theory, opens up potential opportunities for the development led economic growth in the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Thus the move is bound to have a significant impact on demography, culture, and politics of Jammu and Kashmir.

2. The attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require active participation of the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs). Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

- Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs) is a revolutionary concept to build democracy at the grassroot level. In India it has significantly transferred the representative democracy into participatory democracy with the bottom up approach of governance.
- The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals and 169 targets set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030.

Body

- Around 68.86% of India's population lives in rural area, which makes role of PRIs in attaining the SDGs crucial.
- The implementation of SDGs needs every country to judiciously prioritize, and adapt the goals and targets in accordance with local challenges, capacities and resources available.
- SDGs can be met only through high standards of governance at all levels. In

this respect, India is especially fortunate to have highly committed governments at the central (union), state and local level.

Role of Gram Panchayat in localising SDGs

The role of panchayats in the attainment of SDGs is summed up as follows:

1. Convergent implementation of schemes-

Ensure effective implementation of flagship programmes pertaining to livelihood like National Rural Livelihood Mission, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Swachh Bharat Mission etc. Eg The Assam governments Samagra Gram Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) – a 5-year mission to initiate investment in rural areas towards doubling farmers' incomes.

2. Participatory outcome based planning for local development

- Effective functioning of the Gram Sabha as participatory discussion and decision making forum for local development.
 - Ensure coordinated functioning in tandem with Self Help Groups and their collectives o
 - Institute outcome based planning that sets baselines and monitors advancement in development indices.

3. Specific governance interventions in panchayats

- Effective functioning of Standing Committees and Functional Committees of the panchayats
- Strengthening fora for community participation
- Institution of clear community based monitoring and tracking mechanisms and information feedback to the community.

4. Interventions across tiers of panchayats

- Effect convergent planning between the three tiers of Panchayati Raj
- Effective functioning of the District Planning Committees which link rural and urban planning
- Coordination for service delivery and implementation of flagship schemes.
- Eg. The Government of Bihar's umbrella programme titled 7 Nischay (or 7 resolves) addresses challenges in multiple sectors following an inter-sectoral approach.

The local development plans of Panchayats is expected to synchronize with attainment of identified sectoral goals. Building local leadership capacities and promoting aspirational Panchayats by enabling them to find innovative, community driven, sustainable solutions to local problems is key to attaining the SDGs at the local level.

The way ahead

It is very crucial that the Village/Gram Panchayats develop their own action plan to improve living conditions.

- In rural Indian context, the living condition is linked with the practice of social justice principles. There is a need to be more inclusive in addressing the problems of people from different sections.
- Strengthening stakeholder participation in governance particularly in decision making. The various village level committees formed under different development programs – School Management Committee, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee, Matru Mangal Samiti for Anganwadi, PDS Committee, etc. shall be strengthened so that they plan and monitor the service delivery.
- Each village panchayat must assess the status of various public assets and services with regard to its functionality.
- The gram panchayat and various committees must periodically assess all the services. Primary focus must be given to five key services: (i) anganwadi (Child care) as it has direct link with child development and curbing malnutrition (ii) primary education – it has link with universal literacy particularly among girls (iii) drinking water and sanitation – it has direct link with the health status and wellbeing (iv) access to public health services – it will improve institutional delivery and healthy life (v) access to public distribution system and food availability in anganwadi and mid-day-meal – it will address malnutrition.

3. How does lack of adequate number of forums for dispute resolution affect ease of doing business in India? Analyse. What measures can be taken to address this problem? Suggest.

Introduction

Economic survey 2016-17 gave a report on economic costs due to delays in dispute resolution which accounts as much as 5-6% of GDP. The delay, as world bank suggest is as much as 4-5 yrs causing serious lapses in ease of doing business. Pending commercial disputes in Indian courts have multiplied 123% between 2015 and 2017.

Body

Lack of forums:

Business involves several parameters which decides the ease of running it and inadequate forums for dispute resolutions in these would affect the business.

- A recent survey by FICCI enlisted bureaucratic delays, corruption, tax terrorism (e.g. angel tax) act as major hurdle for start-ups. However, there is still no dedicated dispute resolution forum for start-ups. Because of this, venture and angel investors are reluctant to invest in India and take to countries like Singapore, USA where there is a separate start up dispute resolution forum.

- Construction permit: a multiplicity of forums can be seen and there is a lack of coordination among them. A single dispute resolution forum to look into the applications of permits is missing. This causes delays in starting business making India unattractive for investors.
- Property registration: due to inadequate property record details in digital form brings dispute and a pan India land dispute resolution forum is absent. This causes cost and time overrun for business and hence causes constraint in ease of doing business.
- Paying taxes: up until recently, there were multiple indirect taxes causing litigations with very few tax dispute resolution forums to adjudicate the same. This caused judicial delays and caused a form of tax terrorism.
- Trade across borders: A mutually consensual trade dispute resolution forum is absent with many of our neighbors. This let trade dispute in international forums like WTO and affects Indian credibility in international markets. This affects business investment and rising public shares (domestic and foreign).
- Enforcing contracts: Instead of a separate dispute resolution forum, most of the cases is pending with High court or supreme court. This creates uncertainty in Indian economy and adversely affects investors.
- Insolvency resolution: only recently IBC was passed. Before that, the successful arbitration was less. Also, the teething problems of industries seen as failure and stopping credit is de-motivating for any investors.

Measures that can be taken:

- Arbitration mechanism promotion: like the recent passage of New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bil etc.,
- Real estate Regulation authority: as adjudication authority in construction permit, property registration within a municipal area etc.,
- Judiciary must only look into the political philosophy and constitutionality without entertaining appeals involving technical nature.
- Bilateral and multilateral investment treaties to prevent or handle the cross-border trade disputes. A multilateral dispute resolution body can be established.
- Digitisation: use of IT brings in efficiency, speedy permit grants, avoids physical contact of authorities avoiding corruption and thus bringing down the number of disputes.
- Penalise litigation culture: government must try to discourage parties wanting to opt for the litigation process by making the litigation process more expensive than ADR. This would prompt parties to approach ADR institutes as the first mode or step of conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Thus, a healthy environment for ease of doing business involve an optimal number of dispute resolution forums. A well-established Alternative Dispute Resolution is a prerequisite as well. Even the Urjit patel committee suggested to rationalize the number of forums and bring reforms in National litigation policy. With above

measure, the aim of ease of doing business ranking can be achieved.

4. What is the role and mandate of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament? Recently the government decided to end the tradition of opposition party chairing the committee. What are your views on this?

Introduction

The Standing Committee on External Affairs/Foreign Affairs is one of the Departmentally Related Standing Committees, which has been constituted to examine matters pertaining to the Ministry of External Affairs and the institutions/organizations falling under its purview.

Body

Role and mandate of the Foreign Affairs Committee

As per Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the activities being performed by the Standing Committee on External Affairs are:

- Examination of Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and make reports thereon.
- Examination of such bills pertaining to both the above Ministries that are referred to the Committee by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker as the case may be and make a report thereon.
- Consideration of Annual reports of both the Ministries and make reports thereon.
- Consideration of national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses, if referred to the Committee by the Chairman Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, as the case may be, and makes reports thereon.
- In addition to this, the committee also meets with visiting foreign delegations from various countries from time to time.

Implications of the government decision to end the tradition of opposition party chairing the committee

Parliamentary committee of Foreign Affairs draws its authority from Article 105 (on privileges of Parliament members) and Article 118 (on Parliament's authority to make rules for regulating its procedure and conduct of business). Committee reports are usually exhaustive and provide authentic information on matters related to governance. Bills that are referred to committee is returned to the House with significant value addition. Parliament is not bound by the recommendations of

committees.

External affairs committee, much like the Public Accounts Committee, is conventionally headed by an MP from the main opposition. Recently the government decided to end the tradition of opposition party chairing the committee. Implications of this move may involve

- Parliamentary Committees comprising members across party lines from both the Houses. They can call for and examine witnesses, look into the minutiae of an issue, and give detailed recommendations, but most important, they allow a member to speak her mind on an issue without the need to toe the party line. This helps build consensus to resolve deadlocks in legislation. The outcome is usually a report tabled in Parliament having “persuasive” or “advisory” value. This move may affect to build consensus to resolve deadlock in legislation
- A Parliamentary committee not only examines each provision within the Bill extensively, giving each member multiples opportunities to present her detailed views and amendments, but also acts as a check on poorly drafted provisions within legislation which is hurriedly passed through a House. Additionally, given the bipartisan nature of such committees, the government all but co-opts the Opposition from opposing the Bill once the report has been tabled. This move may not provide opportunity to express views of the Opposition Parties.
- When a government lacks the numbers in a House to pass the contentious bill, the committee process helps bring on board support which it would otherwise lack. But where a government has adequate numbers to push through legislation, it might view the committee as superfluous at best, and, perhaps, even a disadvantage, as it allows the Opposition to get its dissent noted on record. This move may lead bypassing the views of opposition in the committee which may inimical to parliamentary democracy.

Conclusion

It's believed that Indian polity has been able to sustain its democratic nature because of the constant scrutinizing by opposition parties. A party might not be able to form the government at the center because of the lack of majority, but that doesn't take away the responsibility of acting as a watchdog of the ruling party. When it comes to questioning the government and preventing them from taking negative strides, parliament is the most suitable platform for the opposition to leverage.

- 5. In the light of the changing parliamentary dynamics, the role of the Speaker must be reassessed and recalibrated to make parliamentary proceedings more effective and efficient. Comment.**
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Introduction

The office of the Speaker is a Constitutional Office. The Speaker is guided by the constitutional provisions and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. With the parliament seeing several disruptions, the role of speaker becomes vital for the productive functioning of parliament.

Body

Changing parliamentary dynamics:

The majority government and the way of opposition working in the parliament has been a cause of concern for the reasons like

- Committee scrutiny: The bills are not being referred to the parliamentary standing committees. E.g. the latest budget session passed around 30 bills without complete committee scrutiny.
- Ensuring discipline in the House: Falling productivity of parliamentary sessions. It is the speaker responsible maintaining discipline and decorum of Lok Sabha. E.g.
- In 2015, 1/3rd of bills in budget session is passed in 2-3 hrs.
- 2016 winter session was a washout due to disruptions etc.,
- As per Association of democratic reforms, the 15th Lok Sabha has been the most unproductive House since independence owing to the disruptions and lack of discipline among the elected representatives. The Speaker is empowered to initiate disciplinary action against the disrupting MPs, but had failed to do so.
- Misuse of 'Money Bill' power: Allegations of bills passed as money bills which is certified by speaker. E.g.
- Aadhar bill passed as money bill which was challenged in supreme court.
- Recently, in the budget session the government had included amendments to the RBI Act in a Finance Bill so as to circumvent the 'obstructionism' of Rajya Sabha, where the government is not in a majority.
- Defection: The power to disqualify legislators under 10th schedule and the incidents of defection on several instances.
- Conferring Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha: No Leader of opposition in Lok Sabha was elected in the last 2 terms which is the prerogative of speaker.
- Breach of privilege moved against the prime minister and it is the speaker who is the first level of scrutiny.

Reassessment and Recalibration of speaker role:

Speaker is the epitome of impartiality and regarded to be the true guardian of the traditions of parliamentary democracy. Hence, the speaker elected should be impartial and apolitical.

- The speaker can be barred from future political office or to be fielded as an independent candidate (except for post like president/Vice president).
- The speaker of India remains to be a member of political party even after elected as speaker. This can be reformed as in UK so that after election as the Speaker of Lok Sabha, he/she resign from the political party. This will help the speaker to be objective in deciding the defection cases, privilege motions in the house.
- The speaker can be elected from the opposition party as was experimented in 1996.
- In critical decisions like disqualification for defection, president can be made the determining authority with inputs from the Election Commission than the speaker.
- As in case of Ireland or in UK, it is observed 'once a speaker is always a speaker'. A speaker is not inducted into the cabinet in future. Offering future rewards for performance of speaker make the position a spoils post and makes it political. The same has to be followed in Indian parliament as well.
- There must be clearly marked role for speaker vis-à-vis the bills that is sent to the committee scrutiny. He should be accountable for any deviations with respect to the same. In the same lines, the role of certifying money bill by the speaker becomes imperative and there is a need for reassessment in this role with an additional level of expert scrutiny.
- The need for reelection skews incentives for the speaker. This can be reformed as in UK where the constituency of the speaker is uncontested.
- If the speaker has worked in an impartial and efficient manner during the tenure of his/her office, he/she should be allowed to continue in the next parliament.

Conclusion

Supreme court in BP Singhal case said that "Governor is the constitutional head of the state. He is not an employee or an agent of the Union government nor a part of any political team". The same applies to speaker as well. A set of reforms as suggested above will help in smooth, fair and unbiased functioning of the office.

- 6. The governance mantra in contemporary free market economy is that the government has no business to be in business. In a politico-economic milieu like this, how are labour rights protected? Are there proactive and powerful pressure groups for the furtherance of labour interests in India? Discuss.**

Introduction

A free market economy is a type of economy that promotes the production and sale

of goods and services, with little to no control or involvement from any central government agency. The economic system is primarily based on supply and demand. Order and power in a free market are decentralized, with individuals making all of their own voluntary economic choices.

Body

- In a free market economy, firms and households act in their own self-interest to determine how resources get allocated, what goods get produced, and who buys the goods. A free market economy is functions in an opposite manner as a command economy works, where the central government gets to keep the profits and choose how to use them.
- The government's role in the economy is limited (e.g. to preventing monopolies, allowing fair and equal access to markets for all, protecting the nation and its markets through military means).
- As India's Prime Minister has said recently, Government's job is that of a facilitator to create new opportunities and in the government system, the fewer the laws the less suffocated businesses feel.

A free market protects the rights of workers by allowing the workers to decide what's best for themselves.

- The basis of a free market is voluntary interaction in which both parties engage in a consensual agreement. Because of this, in a free market, almost any exchange would be win-win.
- At the same time, an unregulated, free market would not protect the rights of workers. Free markets are subject to manipulation, mis-information, asymmetries of power & knowledge, and foster wealth inequality.
- Also in a free market, a competitive environment creates an atmosphere of survival of the fittest. This causes many businesses to disregard the safety of the general public to increase the bottom line.
- Regulation is aimed at balancing free market's virtues against its pitfalls as although some aspects of the market may be self-regulating, other things, such as environmental concerns, require government intervention.

In India, there are 44 labour laws under the purview of Central Government and more than 100 under State Governments, which deal with a host of labour issues. Unfortunately, these labour laws protect only 7-8 percent of the organised sector workers employed at the cost of 93 percent unorganised sector workers.

Following are some of the Central legislations passed under different articles of the Constitution-:

- Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
 - Industries (Regulation and Development) Act of 1951.
 - Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
 - Factories Act of 1948.
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- Contract labour Act 1970.
- Trade Unions Act 1926.

In addition, the multiplicity of statutes, there are concerns around the protection of the workforce and effective implementation of statutes.

As a part of its ease of doing business initiative, the government will be subsuming a total of 44 labour laws into four codes — on wages, social security, industrial safety and welfare and industrial relations. Further, the Union Cabinet has cleared the Occupational, Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, earlier it approved the Code on Wages Bill.

- A pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest. They are a vital link between the government and the governed.
- Trade unions/Labour Unions are a form of pressure groups who cater to the demand of workers and labours of the industries. Alternatively, they are also known as labour groups.
- Some of the most important functions of the trade union are as follows:
 - Increasing Co-operation and Well-being among Workers
 - Securing Facilities for Workers
 - Establishing Contacts between the Workers and the Employers
 - Trade Unions working for the Progress of the Employees
 - Safeguarding the Interests of the Workers
 - Provision of Labor Welfare.
- In India, different trade unions represent different political parties. Examples- The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), All India Trade Union Congress (Communist Party of India)
- Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and Hind Mazdoor Sangh are also labour unions which are proactive and push for labour interests in India. Recently, they played a key role in influencing the government towards not signing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership(RCEP) to safeguard the interests of labourers in India.

Conclusion

Pressure groups, different as they are from political parties, exist and function to influence the policies of the government to attain their specific/particular interests. Their role, in modern democracies like India is, indeed, significant towards the empowerment of proletariat section of population.

- 7. In the light of rapidly changing socio-economic dynamics brought in by the internet and social media, examine the challenges faced by the Election Commission as the watchdog of democracy in India.**
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Introduction

Election Commission (EC) acts as the watchdog of democracy in India and has reservoir of power under article 324 of the Indian constitution, as per the Supreme Court.

The need to address a large number of voters across spatial and social divides in a first-past-the-post system necessitates the deployment of new communication technologies for a more efficacious political campaign.

However, changing socio-economic dynamics brought in by the internet and social media have posed many challenges for EC.

Body

Rapidly changing socio-economic dynamics brought in by the internet and social media

- Suspension of norms of civility
- Use of bots and unfair means to trend on social media
- Phenomenon of fake news and misinformation
- Institutionalization of the democratic structure
- Othering/marginalization of some sections
- Dilution of public reasoning
- Allegations of hacking of EVMs

Challenges faced by the Election Commission

- Suspension of norms of civility - and responsibility owing to the anonymous nature of the engagement on internet and social media. Free and fair election is important not only for expression of the will of people but also to maintain social cohesion and democratic values of equality, fraternity etc. Enforcing Model Code of Conduct in such a scenario becomes extremely difficult.
- Use of bots and unfair means to trend on social media - The immediacy of the engagement, with deep penetration through the device of posts going viral, sometimes, allegedly, owing to the deployment of bots, creates challenge in conducting free and fair election.
- Phenomenon of fake news and misinformation - an important aspect of the role that social media are likely to play in the elections is the phenomenon of fake news and misinformation. The social rupture caused by such campaigns, including heightened insecurity for marginalised sections of society, is phenomenal.
- De-Institutionalization of the democratic structure - A relatively small

financial cost lends the ability to a small number of users to bombard the electorate with party political messages with little political accountability or responsibility. The net impact is in geometric proportion to the number of such platforms deployed. The result is the de-institutionalization of the democratic structure and a strengthening of what Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph call a command polity.

- Othering/marginalization of some sections - This is the space where othering takes place with impunity and with only a miniscule risk of social censure. Absolved of the responsibility to defend their views in an open arena of co-equal citizens, regressive actors are able to campaign for their political viewpoints from the safety of a smartphone.
- Dilution of public reasoning - the fulcrum of public reasoning is shifting to the construction of the other. It therefore becomes less important for political actors to propose their own programme of action and more important for them to contest characterizations by others.
- Allegations of hacking of EVMs – When it's difficult to verify news and counter fake news, allegations like hacking of EVMs may gain traction. This will completely shake the credibility of EC and erode trust in the election process.

Some of the recent steps taken by EC

- EC conducted EVM hackathon.
- Banned prominent politician from campaigning for certain period in recent Lok Sabha election.
- Banned a biopic movie.
- Banned election campaign in Kolkata due to eruption of violence.
- SVEEP – Systematic voter's education and electoral awareness program.
- C-Vigil – to maintain the integrity of election process.
- Election commission has setup Media Certification and Monitoring Committee

Conclusion

Efforts to regulate social media and internet by the government have been contested and therefore its unregulated nature is most likely here to stay. The efforts at internal regulation through a voluntary code of conduct by some platforms is the need.

8. How far do the terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission encapsulate the spirit of fiscal federalism? Critically examine.

Introduction

Finance Commission of India is an independent and non-partisan institution, which is a constitutional body, whose recommendations can have a drastic impact on the nature of fiscal federalism in the country. The main tasks of the commission are to strengthen cooperative federalism, improve the quality of public spending and help protect fiscal stability.

Body

The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted in the backdrop of the abolition of Planning Commission, the abolition of distinction between plan and non-plan expenditure and the far reaching structural tax changes embedded in the Goods and Services tax.

The Terms of Reference of this Commission are somewhat unique including monitorable performance criteria for important national flagship programmes, and examining the possibility of setting up permanent non lapsable funding for India's Security needs.

Conventionally, the Terms of References of FC can be seen as below:

- Principles governing the vertical devolution of taxes between union and states.
- Principles governing the Horizontal distribution between the states.
- Grant in aid to states, supplement the resources of PRI, ULBs from states' Consolidated funds.
- Performance Based incentives for States

In this regard, the performance based incentives for the states will be based on multiple criteria which will be helpful in promoting fiscal federalism in the following manner-

- Efforts made by the States in expansion and deepening of tax net under GST will help in realisation of a competitive tax environment where fiscal position of states will improve in turn improving the fiscal federalism.
- 'Progress made in increasing capital expenditure, eliminating losses of power sector, and improving the quality of such expenditure in generating future income streams' criteria can help tackle the stress of NPAs in power sector and improve the fiscal situation of states.
- 'Control or lack of it in incurring expenditure on populist measures' criteria can help arrest the burden of populist measures under political compulsions.
- 'Progress made in sanitation, solid waste management and bringing in behavioural change to end open defecation' criteria can help overcome the burden due to sanitation related health expenditure especially in poorer states.

At the same time, there has been considerable contestation over the new provisions of Terms of reference and these are seen as antithetical to the vision of Fiscal

federalism due to the following factors-

- The ToR's are seen as too expansive, and that this expansiveness is in the direction of tilting the fiscal balance further in favour of the Centre.
- The call to revisit the previous FC's decision to increase the share of the states is worrying.
- The ToR states that the commission may also examine if revenue deficit grants are to be provided at all. To suggest that revenue deficit grants may not be provided is equivalent to demanding the Commission to disregard Articles 275. This is a violation of constitutional guarantees as well as fiscal federalism principles.
- The 15th Finance Commission has been mandated to use data from the 2011 Census, instead of 1971 Census, as the base for determining revenue share across states. This, southern states have argued, may penalize them for their successful efforts in controlling population growth, by decreasing their share in the overall resource pool.
- The TOR proposes that all states be judged, among other criteria, on how well they implemented flagship schemes of the Centre. However, it seems irrational considering there are many schemes of the Central government that the states have neglected because they have corresponding state schemes running successfully.
- The recent, last-minute addition of asking FC XV to suggest ways of allocating non-lapsable funds for defence and internal security can be surely considered as against the ideals of fiscal federalism as defence is a union subject.

These issues call for reform of the overall architecture of fiscal federalism. Three possible options can be considered-

- One option is to only allow transfers through untied tax devolution.
- A second option is to make the FC a permanent body and expand its mandate to undertake the resource allocation role of the erstwhile Planning Commission.
- A third option is to revive the Inter-State Council as an effective federal decision-making body.

Conclusion

Sustainable Development Goal SDG10 aims for reducing inequality within and among countries. Goal16 requires nations to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. An equitable distribution of revenue tied with performance incentives will help greatly in this regard as well as achieving the ideals of fiscal federalism.

9. Examine the factors behind the rising prices of onions in India. What are the usual interventions that the government makes to tackle sudden spikes in food commodities? Examine.

Introduction

The fluctuation of prices of onions is a yearly phenomenon in India which hovers around Rs.100/kg in peaks and falls to even Rs.1/kg in times of oversupply. The issue as per the experts is due to the mismanagement of surplus than the shortage of supply.

Body

Factors Behind increasing price of onions:

- Supply shortage: the following happened creating shortage in onions supply.
 - Fresh onions are available from the month of January to May. The rest of the time is supplied from Rabi onions which comes from few states and mismanagement in stocks create supply problem.
 - Delayed arrival of monsoon and in turn delayed sowing of early kharif crop which create shortage/delay in supply.
 - Significant rains at the time of harvest of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka crop in August/September which results in crop loss.
 - Import of the onions were delayed due to delay in tender and also due to supply shortage from other countries.
- Government intervention were inadequate. A timely and flexible measures as per the demand and supply is needed which were not taken like
 - Government did not increase stocks in spite of warning signs of supply shortage.
 - The export restrictions were not imposed in time.
 - Price stabilization fund (of around Rs.500 crore) is found to be inadequate to arrest the rising price by effective market intervention.
- Policy inconsistency: in terms of stock limits and export restrictions has resulted in limited players in the industry which creates the procurement and distribution problems increasing the prices.
- Inadequate storage, transportation facilities and improper distribution system.
- Cartelization: by the middle man creating artificial shortage in supply.
- High prices in addition to fear of even higher prices is leading consumers also to buy more than needed and hoard.

Government measures to address the issue of sudden spike in food commodities prices:

- Market intervention:
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- Central agencies like Nafed and the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India selling from the buffer stocks.
- Increasing supply through government designated markets like Rythu Bazaars of Andhra Pradesh, Mother dairy of Delhi etc.,
- Boosting domestic supply:
 - Government ban exports or place limits in the quantity of exports to increase the supply in domestic markets.
 - It imposes minimum export price (MEP) to check unrestricted exports.
 - Restrictions on stock limits on hoarding by the traders and middleman.
- Imports: the government imports the food commodity in question to increase the supply as also being done recently to check onion prices.
- Long term measures:
 - Reducing storage losses which accounts around 30% on average through constructions of cold storages, modern technology warehouses etc.,
 - Schemes like Operation greens with the target to stabilise the supply of tomato, onion and potato crops (TOP crops) in India, as well as to ensure their availability around the country, year-round without price volatility.
 - Agricultural market reforms like APLM act, formation of NAM etc.,
 - Contract farming guidelines and streamlining to strengthen the distribution system.

Conclusion

Arresting the food prices fluctuations is prerogative not only for the consumers, but also is vital to ensure remunerative price for the producers(farmers) as sudden spike is usually ends up in massive price crash. Structural changes through reforms in transportation, market and storage is needed to address the issue.

10. Government can only be an enabler of change in a sector. Do you agree? In this light, critically evaluate the turn that India' public policy discourse has taken over the last few years.

Introduction

In its seventh decade of independence, India stands on the cusp of major change: a transformation that could lead to unprecedented economic growth paired with radical improvements in the nation's public policy discourse. To support progress in

such an endeavour, the government is incorporating multiple changes for better digital infrastructure, acting as an enabler in the various sectors.

Body

- The government is playing the role of an enabler to create an environment that will provide for transparent, non-predatory and fair pricing for different sectors to increase their revenue.
- This is being achieved by refraining from changing the rules and adhering to contractual obligations such as those of long-term off take agreements, apart from holding mutual consultations in a transparent manner for any changes in the contracts.
- Consistency and continuity in government policies with proper regulation can create a predictable market for industries, who then can build large projects. This results from efforts of government to act as an enabler for businesses rather than stifle the energy of growing industries.
- Recently, India was ranked 63rd position in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 report which is a great improvement from earlier ranking which has helped in improving performance in many sectors and is a result of consistent efforts since the past few years.
- An additional benefit of improving ease of doing business in India could take the form of greater confidence in India on the part of multinational companies, which would translate into larger flows of foreign direct investment and know-how into India, two essential ingredients for growth and innovation.
- The private sector has a major opportunity to help India improve its performance in each industry. Companies that can craft solutions to support such performance improvement can reap benefits including entry into new markets, increased revenues, and a much stronger market position than that of their competitors.
- The Indian policy framework today is to empower the states more and to decentralize decision making for funding, so we will see dynamic and vibrant states almost competing with each other for resources and being much more open to investment.

The fundamental regulatory or policy transformations over the past few years under the current government include:

1. The passage of the goods-and-services tax, which is going to create an integrated market in India for the first time. It's a value-added tax regime, which is going to dramatically reduce all of the inefficiencies and barriers within the internal market.
2. Next is the financial infrastructure, i.e., the Jan-Dhan Yojana, which has enabled 100 million-plus bank accounts enabled by mobile phones. The provision of benefits transfer directly to people's bank accounts, using their mobile phone and the Aadhaar is a unique platform—there is no other country in the world that has this scale of mobile-driven bank accounts with

the ability to transfer money and services directly to the beneficiary without all of the leakages that have plagued the sector for many, many years.

3. The launch of Digital India by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the objective of connecting rural areas with high-speed Internet networks and improving digital literacy, the digital revolution has already started happening in India. This vision of the digital India programme presented by the central government has resulted in inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, products, manufacturing, and job opportunities.
4. India took a bold and innovative step in creating Invest India, a one stop shop to promote foreign direct investment, which has helped streamline some administrative enablers. However, as the 2018 Global Competition Review shows, other countries are following suit and easing the regulatory framework for domestic investors
5. Platforms like UPI-integration and products like the BHIM app is a commendable step as each sector - be it education, healthcare, infrastructure and more - benefits from being associated with a rising digital economy, which helps the overall economy of India to benefit from the digital revolution.

The country also saw improvement in public sector performance and e-governance structure. The introduction of a new insolvency law has helped make the legal system more efficient at settling disputes, which no doubt will be viewed positively by both foreign and domestic investors. Improved monetary policy framework and easing access to finance conditions has also delivered a strong performance on the SME financing indicator, where India ranks 16th.

Conclusion

Despite unfavorable global economic conditions, policy-makers in India must continue to put a premium on prudent macroeconomic management, including maintaining fiscal and monetary discipline. Furthermore, policies that have helped improve its competitiveness must be maintained. This includes reforms that will help inject further dynamism into the administrative apparatus.

11. Critically evaluate the recent measures taken by the government to address the vulnerabilities of the transgenders and LGBT community.

Introduction

The population of transgender community is officially 5 lakhs as per 2011 census and unofficially LGBT account for around 3-4 million as per a report submitted by government to the supreme court. Being identified as one of the most vulnerable community, the government has over the years taken various measures to uplift them.

Body**Government measure to address LGBT vulnerabilities:**

- The government has passed Transgender Bill 2019 to address the various issues of LGBT community with features
 - Definition of transgenders to choose the gender does not match the gender assigned at birth certified by district administration.
 - Prohibition against discrimination: including denial of service or unfair treatment vis a vis education, employment, healthcare, access to goods, right to movement, right to reside and so on.
 - Establishment of National council for transgender persons.
 - Urging the relevant governments to take welfare measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society.
- Further, the government has allowed transgenders to change their gender without sex reassignment surgery and declassified transgender as a mental illness.
- Transgender has been declared as a ‘third gender’ by several state governments.
- A Media Committee has been constituted in the Ministry of social justice and empowerment for the purpose of initiating sensitization drives in society.
- The central government has formulated an umbrella scheme which includes scholarship for education, vocational training, pension and monetary support etc., Also, Ministry of Labour and Employment has directed states to give vocational training under skill development initiative.
- MGNREGA scheme provide employment for transgenders.
- The state governments have taken various measures like
 - Kerala has passed bill to provide reservation for transgender community in higher education, reservation in metro and so on.
 - The state of Tamilnadu introduced Transgender welfare policy.
 - Maharashtra has setup a welfare board assessing the state of LGBT and recommend measures for their development.
 - The SWE EKAR scheme of Odisha government with provisions of monetary support, reservation in jobs etc.,
- Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019 requires the employer to provide a hygienic work environment like separate bathing places and locker rooms for male, female and transgender employees.
- Various expert committees are formed by centre and state governments to recommend welfare measure for LGBT community.

These measures have been helping in mainstreaming transgenders and the recent supreme court ruling decriminalizing sec 377 has provided respite for LGBT community against exploitation. The welfare schemes have provided wide range opportunities in education and employment with support from both centre and several state governments.

Critical assessment:

However, the measure taken by the government has been inadequate and half-hearted.

- The transgender bill has issues like the mandatory certification by district administration violating privacy and the use of 'Shall' making it voluntary on the part of government to take welfare measures.
- The reservation in education and employment has been sidelined by the central government.
- The government is silent in spite of several fundamental rights of LGBT is being violated like discrimination in provisions on rape of a transgender, violation of right to privacy in getting gender identity etc.,
- The intersex group has been neglected by the government which just consider LGBT which is different from intersex group.
- Same-sex marriages are still not legally recognized in India.

This can be derived from the ground reality where in transgender community still faces discrimination and social exclusion. Study by NHRC revealed that 98% of transgenders are separated from their family, 60% never attended schools and 92% are deprived of the right to participate in any form of economic activity in the country with even qualified ones refused jobs.

Further, around 57 percent are keen on getting sex-alignment surgery but don't have money for it showing the lack of government support to the community in taking their life choices.

Furthermore, 18 percent of them are physically abused, 62 percent are verbally abused in school. 15 percent are harassed by students as well as teachers which depicts the failure of government in mainstreaming LGBT community as a normal section in the society including schools.

Conclusion

Thus, several measures have to be taken like dedicated research studies to design appropriate programs/schemes for LGBT, mass-media awareness campaigns, legalizing same-sex marriage, medical facility for transgender, reservation in employment and education and so on. As a progressive nation, it is vital for India to take measures alleviating the stigma associated with LGBT and utilize their potential in national development upholding their fundamental rights.

12. Each year thousands of children die in government hospitals in India. Recently, more than a hundred children died in a hospital in Rajasthan. Why do such incidents occur so frequently? Critically examine. What urgent measures are needed to

salvage the situation? Suggest.

Introduction

A recent UNICEF report revealed that in India over 882,000 children under the age of five died in 2018 — that is over 100 children every hour, or a child every minute, out of which, most of the casualties have been in government hospitals, which is shocking for a country aspiring to be a global superpower in the near future.

Body

- As per official records, more than 600 infants have died in child care wards of government hospitals in Rajasthan and Gujarat since December 1, 2019, where all of the deaths occurred in the neonatal and perinatal ICUs.
- The children were brought into the hospital by parents, mostly from economically weaker sections, from surrounding rural areas where the children were found to be critically ill when brought to the hospital.

Such a situation has been observed repeatedly with regards to government hospitals across India and especially North India. This can be due to the following factors:

- Open door policy and increased referrals - Unlike private facilities, public medical hospitals cannot turn away a patient who comes to them which leads to two/three children on a bed being a common sight in public facilities. This is further exacerbated by the sickest children who have been referred out of other hospitals landing up in public facilities.
- Lack of adequate infrastructure - Majority of public medical facilities are suffering from infrastructure deficiencies. For example, the neonatal ICUs and paediatric ICUs of government medical Colleges have insufficient beds. But the occupancy ratio is more than 180%, which clearly indicates the level of overstretched facilities.
- Poor Primary and Secondary health facilities - With lower levels of public healthcare being defunct, the entire load falls on the tertiary level. It also means people having to travel hundreds of kilometres to access the most basic healthcare services which could have been taken care of by a district level hospital closer to their homes.
- Quantity and Quality of manpower - a shortage of doctors and supporting staff in the paediatrics department which is evident from the recent case where National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in its fact finding report observed that the hospital did not have faculty as per norms.
- Sanitation and Hospital's procedural deficiencies - A lack of infrastructure and staff, along with unhygienic conditions may have played a role along with maintenance issues. For example, in the recent Kota case, the Press Trust of India news agency cited that more than 70 percent of key equipment like infusion pumps, warmers and nebulisers for newborns were not in working condition at the hospital.

- Other - Further, other situational factors also play an important role like newly born children suffering from low birth weight, premature deliveries and nascent infections, children being admitted at the last minute, increased referrals during the cold month of december, etc.

At the same time, other factors like a good proportion of babies being underweight (an estimated 35% babies born in Rajasthan have low birth weight, which is less than 2.5 kg), travelling long distances in the cold to reach the hospital, the non-availability of baby warmers, etc also play a critical role.

In this regard, the following measures can be considered worthwhile for salvaging the situation and avoiding loss of precious lives:

- The task of making the primary and secondary level health institutions functional ought to be the utmost priority, such that people can access effective healthcare for common and easily treatable conditions nearest to their homes.
- All the vacancies for medical and paramedical posts should be filled promptly and the administrative procedures should facilitate speedier permanent appointments.
- Rural service should be made compulsory for health personnel of varying categories immediately after their graduation. There should not be waivers of any kind to allow the personnel to avoid doing such service.
- For maximal utilization of the infrastructure of public hospitals, provision should be made for both morning and evening OPDs. The necessary staff, equipment, and space should be provisioned for running such clinics and diagnostic set-up.
- Addressing the most common risk factors for child mortality with prevention methods such as access to diarrhea and pneumonia treatment, measles and tetanus vaccinations and increasing access to quality healthcare.
- Much of north India has been hit by a severe cold wave since late in December, and there is a need to provide blankets, bedsheets and heaters to the patients at the hospitals

Conclusion

From a hospital administrator's point of view, it is necessary to remember that there are no shortcuts to long lasting solutions. Nonetheless, it is important to realize that health is a social phenomenon and a public hospital is a social institution which cannot be developed in isolation from the societal conditions in which it operates, which clearly demonstrates the need for a social revolution with regards to improving health apparatus in the nation.

13. How do Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the social sector? Examine. What is the proposed roadmap to achieve the targets related to the social sector? Discuss.

Introduction

SDGs are 17 set of goals as a blueprint to achieve an inclusive sustainable development for all set up in 2015 as part of UN general assembly resolution 2030. These goals are targeted in systematic sustainable development for all with indicators including health, livelihood, women empowerment, poverty elimination, zero hunger etc. These indicators are one of the key indicators in the social sector development.

SDG sets the focus on attainment of these goals through a worldwide agenda and support including those of international organisations and bodies. The focus of the countries to achieve these goals in the set manner also becomes the priority. For eg. In India, Niti Aayog (Government's think tank) is dedicated to achieve the SDGS.

Social sector deals with the rights of citizens to education, land rights, food security, health and sanitation, gender equality, women's empowerment, livelihood and employment guarantee.

Body

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the social sector

- Poverty- Eliminating poverty (SDG 1) eliminating hunger (SDG 2)
- Education (SDG 4)
- Health (SDG 3)
- Gender equality (SDG 5)
- Infrastructure (SDG 9)

Proposed roadmap to achieve the targets related to the social sector

- **Poverty**
 - Several large-scale anti-poverty programmes have been implemented. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, for instance.
 - In order to achieve the goal of housing for all by 2022, direct financial assistance is being extended to poor households. Additionally, initiatives have been launched for providing pension and insurance to workers in the unorganized sector, widows and the differently abled. Over 130 million people have accessed life and accident insurance under these programmes.
 - With respect to clean sources of cooking fuel, over 22 million families have been provided with Liquefied Petroleum Gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

- **Education**

- Stunting among children less than 5 years has declined from 48% to 38.4% between 2005-06 and 2015-16. During the same period, the percentage of underweight children has declined from 42.5% to 35.7%.
- More than 800 million people are covered in India by providing the food grains at affordable prices through the Public Distribution System. The Mid-Day-Meal Programme is providing nutritious cooked meals to 100 million children in primary schools. Additionally, food distribution governance is being strengthened through the digitization of ration cards and an online grievance redressal mechanism.
- Further, sustainable and climate-adaptive agriculture has been boosted by, inter alia, promoting organic farming and issuing of 62 million Soil Health Cards to farmers. A comprehensive plan is also being implemented for doubling farmers' income by 2022.

- **Health**

- The National Health Policy, 2017 has specified targets for universalizing primary health care, achieving further reductions in infant and under-5 mortality, preventing premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases as well as increasing government expenditure on health.
- A composite index is being used to monitor and incentivise improvements in health services delivery across states in the country.
- The government is aiming to immunize all unimmunized and partially immunized children against vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020.
- Towards achieving universal health coverage, a health insurance cover of INR 100,000 is being extended to all poor families.

- **Gender equality**

- While much more progress remains to be made, a number of indicators pertaining to the status of women in India have moved in the right direction over the years. For instance, 68.4% of women were literate in 2015-16, as compared to 55.1% in 2005-06. Additionally, 53% of women were independently using a bank or savings account in 2015-16, which is a significant improvement from 15.1% in 2005-06.
- Numerous measures have been put in place for promoting gender equality. For example, the Beti Bachao Beti Pado (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) initiative focuses on a comprehensive package of interventions for the girl child including those pertaining to education and protection.
- The Maternity Benefit Programme protects women from wage loss during the first six months after childbirth.
- Further, several programmes are being implemented for enabling greater participation of women in the work force.

- **Resilient Infrastructure**

- All forms of transportation – roads, railways, civil aviation and

waterways are being rapidly expanded. Road connectivity and electricity are being brought to all villages.

- The Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. initiative is aiming to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to all village councils in the country.
- Over the last five years, there has been a consistent growth in installed electricity generation capacity. The installed capacity in non-fossil-fuel sectors has grown by 51.3% and more than doubled in the renewable energy sector (solar, wind, bio- and small hydro power).
- India is making efforts to become an Information Technology and manufacturing hub through its 'Make in India' campaign. These efforts have greatly accelerated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows and helped the country sustain an average growth of 7.5% during the last three financial years (2014-15 to 2016-17).
- Employment-intensive manufacturing segments are being boosted by providing easy credit to small-scale business entrepreneurs. Additionally, the 'Start-up India' programme promotes entrepreneurship and labour-intensive economic growth.

Conclusion

These goals reflect our evolving understanding of the social, economic and environmental linkages that define our lives." India's development mantra "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" (Collective Effort, Inclusive Development) and the associated national programs closely track the SDGs.

14. How effective can be strategy of providing a universal basic income to the poor as a poverty alleviation measure in India? Critically evaluate while discussing its pros and cons.

Introduction

Universal basic income (UBI) is an unconditional cash payment given to all citizens with the assumption that they are willing to work but unable to find one. It's a western concept where high level of automation has resulted in high unemployment. The idea has been popularized by philosophers like Thomas Paine who argued that resource of earth is common property of all.

In Indian context, where every third person is a poor, there are huge marginal and small farmers, daily wage workers, who move in and out of poverty, the concept can be useful as a poverty alleviation measure in India. Also universality of program avoids exclusion, bureaucratic burden of identifying beneficiary and cash transfer will not be market distorting.

Body

UBI is an effectiveness poverty alleviation measure in India

Pros

- **Improving living standards** – A study in Indore showed positive results, where majority of people (more than 66 per cent) used it for constructive purposes, like agriculture and some reported a five times increase in livestock. Others tried to uplift their family status by sending children to better schools.
- **Improving production** – Telangana which provides unconditional income of Rs 8,000 per annum to every farmer, shows to have increased the cultivated acreage and also the production by approx. 30 per cent.
- **Investment in agriculture** – This can increase productive investment, increase access to markets and stimulate local economies. Income support can be used to make a repayment or at least activate a bank account which can then receive a loan.
- **Choice of spending** – It will provide people with the choice of spending their money, like sending their children to better schools and other such purposes.
- **Acts as insurance** – Regular income protects farmers during price crash or crop loss.

However, without wider reforms, the poor remain handicapped in their ability to “buy” themselves out of poverty, whether through entrepreneurship or investments in their human capital. A UBI handout could reduce the political incentive for these reforms.

The poor are already abandoning public schools in large numbers and accessing non-state providers to meet their demand for quality human capital. While a UBI would support this trend, fundamental reforms are needed to establish accountability within public schools and enable non-state actors—non-governmental organizations and private schools—to deliver quality learning outcomes.

Cons

- Motivation for work - demographic dividend is the asset of our nation. If youth loose motivation to work then innovation and urge to compete with other nation will be lost. This will hamper out growth.
- Free lunches always pose a moral hazard, where the money can be spent for unproductive purposes or make a person lazy.
- Irrigation facilities, quality inputs, market reforms and land reforms like land bank and land leasing unless undertaken, farming cannot be made remunerative.
- Resource constraint – Approx. Rs. 8000 per year per family, as suggested by Economic survey 2017-18, will be meagre and an adequate amount to take them out of poverty will drain the government exchequer.
- There is a possibility that inflation might increase by the same extent by which income has been given, thus negating the effective increase in income.

Conclusion

Hence in Indian context the adoption of UBI should involve wide ranging debates and discussions. A partial basic income scheme may be introduced on experimental

basis to know its practical viability. But along with it more reforms like strengthening entrepreneurship, remove barriers to job creation, and increase the returns to human capital investments by the poor, specific reforms to allow the poor to gain better education and health etc must be taken.

15. Do you think the implementation of a nationwide NRC would jeopardise India's relations with her neighbours? Critically examine.

Introduction

Recently, according to the ministry of external affairs, India has reached out to countries across the world on the issues of the new citizenship law and the proposed National Register of Citizens as fears were being expressed that India's implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the whole country could hamper its relations with its neighbours especially Bangladesh.

Body

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) holds all the important information of the Indian citizens required for their identification which will be maintained by the Government of India. The legal framework for NRC is laid down in the Citizenship Act of 1955 as amended in 2004.
- In this regard, the implementation of a nationwide NRC would not jeopardise India's relations with her neighbours due to the following factors:
- NRC exercise would be completely an internal matter of India and as a sovereign nation which respects others sovereignty, India has every right to carry out actions internally, which it deems fit.
- Illegal immigration from Bangladesh, comprising both Hindus and Muslims, is an important issue from the national security perspective of India. A large number of Bangladeshi immigrants are illegally living in India. Bilateral dealings of such an important issue thus becomes important.
- The issue is further complicated as sometime back, the Rohingya refugees originally from Myanmar started infiltrating into India through Bangladesh. Association of some Rohingyas with terrorist organisations makes it an internal security for India and needs to be dealt with concerned parties where relations will stabilise with resolution of the problem.
- Bangladesh has already documented its citizens and maintains a biometric record of them. The National Identity Registration Wing (NIDW) was created within the Bangladesh Election Commission for that purpose. India too is justified in undertaking a similar exercise. This will help India get a grip on the problem.
- Once the documentation of citizens is done in India, both sides can share their database. This will help manage the problem in a much more amicable manner. As the India-Bangladesh relationship is currently strong and trust levels on both sides are high, this is the right time to deal with the issue of illegal migration.

- As the NRC exercise would help in establishing a detailed database of citizens for India, it would help in dealing with illegal immigration and as the issue of illegal immigration is concerning majorly only with India-Bangladesh relations, India's relations with its other neighbours would largely be unaffected.

At the same time, many have argued that NRC exercise would jeopardized India's relations with its neighbours in the following manner:

- The partition of India along religious lines had left India with extraordinary challenges about sustaining religious harmony at home and maintaining reasonable relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh. This Pandora's box would open again affecting relations, especially with Bangladesh.
- India's Neighbourhood first and Act East policy could be affected as a result of the NRC exercise and its outcomes where Bangladesh and Myanmar might face the inflow of disenfranchised people from India.
- Regional destabilization could create serious ramifications not just for South Asia, but the wider Indo-Pacific as well. Bangladesh is already struggling under the weight of the refugee crisis of the Rohingya fleeing violence in Myanmar — any added people movement would be beyond its capacity to facilitate and require a significant international response.
- The rhetoric of minority persecution in neighbouring countries embedded in CAA-NRC exercise would certainly affect India's image and relations with concerned neighbours.
- This phenomenon is in line with the growing global trend where internal matters are affecting countries relations with others and in case of India, Bangladesh is clearly affected as India would handover illegal immigrants to it after the NRC exercise.
- China would certainly try to exploit the faultlines between India and its neighbours emerging out of the NRC exercise. This would help it in its string of pearls strategy against India in India's neighbourhood.

The issue of illegal migration in the neighbourhood relationships cannot be swept under the carpet. It will continue to be a stumbling block in the sustenance of a stable relationship. It will be better if all sides look at the issue dispassionately especially when the trust levels are high.

Conclusion

Thus, India, as a country which follows the ideology of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', should not be hasty in taking decisions that can disenfranchise her citizens – contradicting its centuries-followed values. The need of the hour is that the Union Government should clearly chart out the course of action with all the stakeholders involved.

Additional Information - The long-standing issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh should be seen in the context of a report of the Group of Ministers on

National Security, submitted in 2001, which estimated that post-1971 approximately 12 million Bangladeshis have illegally migrated into various states of northeast India. However, this number is expected to be much larger if one includes the illegal

Bangladeshi population residing in other parts of India. Moreover, the Bangladeshis have been illegally coming to India even after 2001.

16. What strategic leverage can India enjoy by maintaining close ties with the Maldives? Explain.

Introduction

Recently, Indian PM's first overseas visit after taking the oath of office for a second term was to Maldives which is an important symbolic gesture reflective of the special relationship that exists between the two countries. This showcased strengthening and invigorating of the traditionally strong and friendly relations further nurtured by geographical contiguity, ethnic, historical, socio-economic and cultural ties between the peoples of the two countries.

Body



- The given map shows the strategic location of Maldives in the Indian ocean as well as with respect to India. In this regard, India can have following strategic leverages by maintaining close relations with Maldives :
- Strategic location - In the Indian Ocean, Maldives archipelago comprising 1,200 coral islands lies next to key shipping lanes which ensure uninterrupted energy supplies to countries like China, Japan, and India. This can be leveraged by India in times of strategic need.

- At the Heart of International Geopolitics - Since China started to send naval ships to the Indian Ocean roughly 10 years ago and right up to the Gulf of Aden in the name of antipiracy operations Maldives' significance has steadily grown as it falls right in the middle of Ocean.
- Regional Security - As the pre-eminent South Asian power and a 'net security provider' in the Indian Ocean region, India needs to cooperate with the Maldives in security and defense sectors. Further, India can tackle extremism in the region with the help of Maldivian authorities.
- Member of SAARC - It is important for India to have the Maldives on board to maintain its leadership in the region especially in SAARC due to the constant acrimony with Pakistan.
- Diaspora - There are 25,000 Indian nationals living in the Maldives (second largest expatriate community). Indian tourists also account for close to 6% of tourists Maldives receives every year.
- UNSC Support - Maldives has extended its support for India's candidature for permanent membership of an expanded and reformed UN Security Council. The Maldives also has reiterated support for India's candidature for a non-permanent seat for the year 2020-21.
- China's footprint: The Maldives has undoubtedly emerged as an important "pearl" in China's "String of Pearls" in South Asia. This can be countered by having a close strategic relationship with Maldives.

Consequently, India has taken the following measures to boost the India-maldives Strategic relationship:

- The signing of the US\$800 million Dollar Line of Credit Agreement in March 2019, for assisting the Maldives to achieve sustainable social and economic development.
- The recent joint exercise Ekatha conducted in April 2019 to strengthen coordination in enhancing maritime security in the region, through coordinated patrolling and aerial surveillance, exchange of information, and capacity building.
- Technical agreement on sharing 'White Shipping Information' between the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force was also signed, enabling the exchange of prior information on the movement of commercial, non-military vessels.

Conclusion

It is important for India to have Maldives in its sphere of strategic influence. India should reach out to all governmental and nongovernmental actors of the atoll in economic, socio-cultural and political arenas. Governmental dialogue mechanisms are not sufficient in themselves, which should in the first place be regularised and supplemented with other means.

17. What are India's strategic and economic interests in the ASEAN? What measures have been taken for increasing outreach to the ASEAN countries? Examine.

Introduction

Relationship with ASEAN is a key pillar of India's foreign policy and the foundation of its Act East Policy. The up-gradation of the relationship into a Strategic Partnership in 2012 was a natural progression to the ground covered since India became a Sectoral Partner of the ASEAN in 1992, Dialogue Partner in 1996 and Summit Level Partner in 2002.

Body

- The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam.
- India's focus on a strengthened and multi-faceted relationship with ASEAN is an outcome of the significant changes in the world's political and economic scenario since the early 1990s and India's own march towards economic liberalisation.
- In this regard, India's strategic and economic interests in ASEAN are as discussed below:
- ASEAN, as a regional grouping based on consensus, has worked tirelessly over 50 years to help secure peace, progress and prosperity in the region. India, therefore, places ASEAN at the centre of its Indo-Pacific vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region.
- Consequently, Maritime cooperation in terms of connectivity, safety and security has gained high attention. For example, to develop connectivity through water, ASEAN and India are working on the Kaladan MultiModal Transit Transport Project.
- Partnership with ASEAN nations might help India counter the growing presence of China and its string of pearls as ASEAN is seen as the most successful regional organisation next only to the EU. Further, the conflict in South China sea can be utilised by India to its advantage.
- India-ASEAN trade and investment relations have been growing steadily, with ASEAN being India's fourth largest trading partner. India's trade with ASEAN stands at US\$ 81.33 billion, which is approx. 10.6% of India's overall trade. India's exports to ASEAN stand at 11.28% of total exports.
- India-Asean ties are based on 3 Cs—Culture, Connectivity and Commerce where Connecting India's North-eastern states with ASEAN becomes crucial for India.

ASEAN's indispensability in India's 'Act East' policy has led to various measures to increase outreach towards ASEAN countries which are discussed below:

- There has been a shift in emphasis with India moving away from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and asserting its centrality in the evolving geography of the Indo-Pacific.
- ASEAN-India connectivity is a priority for India as also the ASEAN countries. While India has made considerable progress in implementing the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multimodal Project, issues related to increasing the maritime and air connectivity between ASEAN and India and transforming the corridors of connectivity into economic corridors are under discussion.
- India has extensively contributed to the ASEAN-India Fund, to support implementation of the ASEAN-India Plans of Action, which envisage cooperation in a range of sectors as well as capacity building programmes in the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres for deepening and intensifying ASEAN-India cooperation.
- India has been cooperating with ASEAN by way of implementation of various projects in the fields of Agriculture, Science & Technology, Space, Environment & Climate Change, Human Resource Development, Capacity Building, New and Renewable Energy, Tourism, People-to-People contacts and Connectivity.

There have been contentions in the India-Asean paradigm with –

- ASEAN member states have been disappointed that India continues to punch below its weight in the region, especially compared to its other Dialogue partners.
- India's capacity to provide development assistance, market access, and security guarantees remains limited.
- India's interest in ASEAN as a multilateral forum remains lackluster as it continues to privilege bilateral partnerships to further its own interests.
- The three Cs of commerce, connectivity, and culture have been highlighted but a more granular perspective is needed in terms of a forging a forward-looking approach.

Conclusion

India's geostrategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region depend on India's bilateral and multilateral engagements with the countries in the region. While India and ASEAN have been very ambitious in articulating the potential of their partnership, they have been much less effective in operationalizing their ideas. The need now is for both sides to focus on functional cooperation and make the idea of India-ASEAN partnership more exciting.

18. In the context of US sanctions against Iran, discuss the ways in which India has protected her economic and strategic interests.

Introduction

The US has recently imposed sanctions through the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which imposes unilateral sanctions against Iran, Russia and North Korea. Even though India is not their primary target, it has become collateral damage to certain U.S. actions.

Body

- The immediate impact of the sanctions on India is that it can no longer use US dollars for transactions with Iran. Investment by Indian companies in Iran's oil and gas development projects and pipeline projects, if sanctioned, may result in companies not being permitted to open new US bank accounts and facing restrictions on loans, licences and Ex-Im credit.
- Consequently, India and Iran agreed to revive its 2012 rupee-rial payment mechanism to receive payments in Indian rupee, where half of the payments would be used to import products from India.
- The once strong oil trade between the countries plummeted after the United States' sanctions regimes disincentivized countries to purchase oil from Iran. The trade volume between India and Iran with respect to other products is expected to be affected after the recent turn of events, apart from the already existing caveat on petroleum trade, owing to the dwindling rupee-rial account.
- India may consider protecting its companies by using countermeasures such as blocking statutes, non-recognition of foreign judgments, clawback rights, reporting requirements – which all aim at preventing citizens or national entities from complying with the sanctions. A blocking statute is a mechanism used by countries to reduce or mitigate the impact of US sanctions on their citizens and businesses.
- Further, India came out largely unscathed from the sanctions on Iran. In order to compensate for the loss of crude from Iran, India resorted to importing more from the US and Venezuela, even as it continued its imports from traditional suppliers such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq.
- Also, India has made successful forays to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, probably for that getting investments from these oil-rich kingdoms. Thus, India loosened its traditional and successful policy of maintaining a balanced relationship with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel. This also becomes important as Iran does not have that kind of spare wealth and nor is it a destination for the Indian diaspora.
- Apart from bilateral trade, Iran seems to be holding an important position in terms of strategic importance for India. Iran's Chabahar port, plays a fundamental role in India's trade connectivity with Afghanistan, Central Asia, Eurasia and Europe. This port is being developed by India. This port is geopolitically significant for India due to its strategic location near the Pakistan-China port of Gwadar in Balochistan province. The delay in the

implementation of the project due to US sanctions had made Iran impatient, and it had started a strategic alliance with China.

- India has secured a written assurance from the US to exempt this port from sanctions during the second 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and US in December 2019. Both countries also “welcomed the utilisation of the port for exports from Afghanistan and discussed ways to promote it”.
- As a U.S. strategic partner, whose cooperation US has sought for its Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, India had hopes for further relaxation of sanctions with regards to Iran as well as Russia, considering India’s unique geopolitical and strategic needs.

Conclusion

India needs to be ready to deal with US sanctions in a more efficient and viable manner in the present and in the future. Further, enhancing India’s strategic autonomy needs to be refocused upon in light of changing global geopolitical scenario to safeguard India’s national interests.

19. How in the ongoing trade war between the US and China affecting India’s economic interests? Is India equipped enough to address the emerging challenges? Critically evaluate.

Introduction

A trade war is defined as an economic war between two or more countries when they try to impose extreme foreign policies so as to protect or gain more control over their own economy. Their profound motive is to reduce competition of commerce by blocking inward trade towards the home country.

China and the United States have been engaged in a trade war through increasing tariffs and other measures since 2018.

The US initiated the tariff barriers on Chinese goods to press demands for an end to policies that Washington says hurt US companies competing with Chinese firms. China too responded with its own tit-for-tat tariffs on US goods.

This exacerbates the uncertainty in the global trading environment, affects global sentiment negatively, and adds to risk aversion globally.

Body

US – China trade war and India’s economic interests

Negative impact

- There could be a short-term impact on the stock markets.
- In a report earlier this year, the IMF noted that the US-China trade tension was one factor that contributed to a “significantly weakened global expansion” late last year, as it cut its global growth forecast for 2019.

- India's shipments track the global trade closely. Regressing past data suggests that for every one percentage point increase in global exports, India's shipments tend to rise by half that much and vice versa

Positive impact

- Several economists have indicated the possibility of India benefiting through increasing exports to the US and a shift of foreign direct investment (FDI) to India.
- India is among a handful of countries that stand to benefit from the trade tensions between the world's top two economies, the UN has said in a report.
- India can strengthen its trade relationships with both superpowers.
- As the US is being protectionist and unilateral, China and India would have to incline towards a multilateral world. China could cultivate a relationship with India as a substitute. It could also open up its markets for Indian goods and services – so could the US.
- There has been a rise in the export of goods to both countries. Export to the US grew by 9.46% to \$52.4 billion. As many as 203 Indian goods are likely to displace Chinese exports to the US, like rubber, carpets, graphite electrodes, etc
- Favourable goods that can replace the Chinese goods in the US are sacks, bags, polymers, printed circuits, automobile lighting equipment, Christmas-lighting sets, etc.
- Diversion in investment flows is an opportunity that India could benefit from, as manufacturers seek alternative origination destinations.

India is not equipped enough to address the emerging challenges

- India has been relatively immune to the collateral damage inflicted on other countries — from Australia to Japan, South Korea and Singapore — by the sparring between China and the US for geopolitical influence. But that apparent good fortune owes little to diplomatic skill and even less to any economic clout. Instead, it reflects India's lack of global competitiveness, its slowing domestic economy, its high cost of money and the paucity of risk capital.
- Exports to the US from some other Asian economies, notably Vietnam and Cambodia, have picked up much more.
- Out of 56 companies that relocated their production out of China between April 2018 and August 2019, only three went to India
- Make in India scheme, designed to encourage manufacturing — is not very effective because of infrastructure bottlenecks.

India need to further liberalise trade, spend more on infrastructure construction, reform land and labour laws and offer tax breaks for foreign investors. Legal reforms, liberation and favourable taxes are necessary for economies to reach their full potential.

Conclusion

Indian policy of adoption of non-alignment in the Cold War era helps India to save itself from the counter effects of the trade war compared to other economies. It maintains economic and diplomatic relationships with countries from either side. Although, if the trade war stretches for a considerable time it would help Indian economy to make strides. Yet, India should not officially push forward any such policy that intends to take advantage of the crisis. We should stick to our fundamental foreign policy of non-alignment and wait and watch without getting involved in the core trade war.

20. What advantages have accrued to India after her membership of the SCO? How can India benefit in the long run? Discuss.

Introduction

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance. It was created in 2001. Its member countries China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan. It is the largest regional organisation in the world in terms of geographical coverage and population, covering three-fifths of the Eurasian continent and nearly half of the human population.

Body

Advantages to India from membership of the SCO

Strategic advantage

- SCO's relevance for India lies in geography, economics and geopolitics.
- SCO cover huge landmass adjacent to India's extended neighbourhood, where India has important economic and security interests.
- Stronger relations with Central Asian republics and a new opportunity to pursue the "Connect Central Asian Policy".

Economy

- SCO holds immense opportunities for India to bolster its trade linkages with Central Asia, a resource rich region.
- SCO membership is also positively linked with development of International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chabahar port, both directed towards expanding transport and reducing costs of trade.

Diplomacy

- Harmonious cooperation in the SCO may pave the way for an India-Pakistan rapprochement.
- SCO membership had facilitated resolution of China's boundary disputes with Russia and Central Asian countries.

Security

- Qingdao Declaration by the SCO member states leader's calls for prioritizing the implementation of the Cooperation Programme to fight terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- The SCO's regional anti-terrorist structure, Anti-Drug Strategy for 2018-2023 and Prevention of the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances will be helpful.

India would be able to seek mutually beneficial partnerships with SCO members in human capital creation, technology, education, and policy convergence in regional trade.

How can India benefit in the long run?

- Indian recently signed MoU regarding export of non-Basmati rice, earlier denied access on phytosanitary ground. More such MoUs must be signed.
- India has also signed a MoU in concerned the sharing of hydrological information on Brahmaputra.
- It also enables the Chinese side to provide hydrological data if water level exceeds mutually agreed level during non-flood season.
- Active participation in counter terror exercises and military drills.
- Transport, energy, e-commerce, information and communication technologies, tourism, agriculture, banking and finance can be made priority areas, with the prospect of expanding the use of national currencies in trade and investment activities.

Conclusion

India has to carve out a political and economic space for itself in Central Asia, alongside Russia's role as net security provider and China's dominating economic presence. The Central Asian countries would welcome India breaking into this Russia-China duopoly.

21. Japan has not only been a trusted partner in India's journey towards economic strength but has also emerged as a critical strategic ally. Do you agree? Critically examine.

Introduction

“We see Japan as a natural partner in our journey of becoming a major centre of manufacturing, investments & knowledge industries” - Indian prime minister.

India and Japan relation has been time tested and are major partners of development as well as defence in the Asian/indo-pacific region.

Body

Japan as a trusted partner for economic development:

- Key source of FDI: Japan is the third-largest source of FDI (\$28.160 billion between 2000 and June 2018) investment into India after Mauritius and Singapore.
- Japan has been extending bilateral loan and grant assistance to India through Official development assistance.
- Investment in the industrial projects like
 - Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (1,483 km high-speed rail and road line) which will see the setting up of new cities, industrial parks, ports and airports.
 - Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train service and has already released the first tranche of 5,500 crore rupees.
 - Delhi Metro Project has also been realized with Japanese assistance.
- India and Japan have already signed CEPA and is working to improve trade aspects through regional connectivity projects as well as multilateral trade agreements like RCEP.
- Even historically, transformational development in the economic history of India was Suzuki Motor Corporation's path breaking investment in India in the early 1980s that revolutionized the automobile sector, bringing in advanced technology and management ethics to India
- Japan support in Indian schemes like Digital India, start up India and so on E.g. India-Japan Digital Partnership, Joint Start-up hub.
- Cooperation in skill development: with tie ups with National skill development corporation and skill development courses launched.

Japan as a key strategic ally:

- Military and Naval exercises: like Shinyu Maitri, Dharma guardian and Malabar.
- Quad group: along with USA and Australia to have deliberations on peaceful development of Indo-pacific region and counter the rising aggressive China.
- 2+2 dialogue: between external and defence ministers to further deepen bilateral security and defense cooperation.
- India and Japan always have a convergence of interest in Indo-pacific region - supported freedom of navigation and unimpeded lawful commerce in international waters and opposed Chinese aggression in South China sea.

- Negotiations are in place to increase the trade in defence equipment from Japan E.g. Japanese US-2 amphibious aircraft for surveillance purpose in the Indian Ocean
- Japan and India signed Nuclear deal recently and this is the first time Japan has signed a nuclear deal with a nuclear power country showing its trust in India.

Concerns in Japan-India relations:

Though, Japan has been a key ally in the Asian region over the time, there are certain concerns which have strained the relations between the two. Some of them are

- Japan-China trade is around \$300 billion compared to \$15 billion between India and Japan. Thus, in economic sense Japan's interest lies more with Chinese than India.
- Japan's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) are major barriers to Indian exports of poultry, meat, shrimps and fruits like mangoes and grapes
- Though a strategic partner, Japan has offered neither military hardware nor technology to India which has immense potential.
- Japan has changed its stance towards Belt and road initiative causing a cause of concern for India.
- The Nuclear power status of India is seen with apprehension by Japan which is the main reason for limited relation in defence and energy sector. Japan had blacklisted Indian firms, stopped ODA after nuclear tests in 1998. Even in the latest signed Civil nuclear deal, there is an escape clause for cancellation of the deal.
- Focused on countering China: Both countries have border and hegemonic issues with China. So, their policy stance hinges generally on China, rather than growing comprehensively.

Conclusion

With 21st century being the Asian century and China being aggressively assertive, Japan will be a key for India to maintain the balance in the region. The development of the Indo pacific is tied to the development of both the countries and they have to strengthen their ties in maritime security, defence deals, Indo-pacific trade and finally use the soft power including people – people connect to realize the dream of Asian century

22.How is China posing challenges in India's engagement with the neighbours? What measures have been taken to instill confidence amongst India's immediate neighbours.

Introduction

India has enjoyed substantial regional influence across South Asia due to its size, comparative economic might, and historical and cultural relevance to the region.

But over the past decade, China has become a significant economic partner to countries throughout the region, forging particularly strong ties with smaller states through trade, diplomacy, aid, and investment.

China has adopted a policy aimed at enhancing the development options of its neighbours as well as promoting new lines of communication or corridors with its southwestern periphery. Much of this impetus has been provided by the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) – a grand connectivity plan that envisions a network of states economically linked to China through a variety of commercial-financial relationships and industrial projects

Body

China posing challenges in India's engagement with the neighbours.

- India's position is challenged by Chinese push into the neighbourhood through the BRI.
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) — an integral component of BRI—is a strategic threat to India. The CPEC is not seen just an economic project but also a security-centric one, especially when the infrastructure can be used for military purposes. Gwadar port is a prime example of such dual-use infrastructure.
- China steps up its engagement with the region largely through its “Belt and Road Initiative”. It can marshal extensive resources on initiatives such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that will likely outpace other financial sources.
- Chinese support for a port, airport, and cricket stadium in Hambantota, and other infrastructure projects revealed an increasingly close relationship between the two countries.
- In Maldives President Abdulla Yameen imposed a state of emergency, against India's advice. It is not difficult to figure out that China's backing is giving Yameen the confidence to snub India.
- China helped K.P. Oli get elected by brokering an alliance of the left parties to take on the pro-India Nepalese Congress.

Measures taken to instill confidence amongst India's immediate neighbours

- Just as Beijing's engagement with India's neighbours increases the status and bargaining position of these smaller states vis-à-vis India, New Delhi too engages with many South East Asian states who seek to hedge their

dependence on China by developing more economic and geopolitical options.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has doubled down on his outreach across South Asia, stressing infrastructure development, people-to-people connectivity, and a “lift all boats” approach to help India’s neighbors gain from its own rise.
- India has generated lots of good will in neighbourhood. For instance Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh.
- The allocation of India’s foreign aid prioritizes Bhutan, demonstrating the special economic relationship that India and Bhutan share.
- Afghanistan is also a significant recipient of Indian aid.

Conclusion

Nearly all of India’s neighbours have expressed a preference for (i) non-alignment or strategic autonomy as a guiding principle in their foreign relations; (ii) multi-directional economic engagement with India, China, the US, Japan and other powers; and (iii) sensitivity towards India including publicly disavowing any move towards offering military facilities or bases to external powers and thus reassuring India on its vital interests.

With an unresolved border and a contentious history, India often views China’s activities in the South Asia neighborhood warily. Yet China’s and India’s efforts in South Asia can overlap, such as in the development of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor, opening up new opportunities for constructive cooperation. India’s “Act East” policy aims to facilitate commerce, culture, and connectivity throughout Southeast Asia, an area that also captures China’s focus. The two countries’ efforts will likely be complementary since the region’s infrastructure needs are so pressing and require trillions of dollars in capital.

23. How do immigration policies of developed countries affect India’s interests?

Introduction

Immigration is coming to a foreign country with the intention of permanently living there whereas Emigration is leaving a resident country with the intent to settle elsewhere. Immigrants generally take up that job which people in the host country (the country to which people have fled) will not or cannot do.

Migrant workers often work longer hours and for lower salaries which benefits host nations. Immigrants contribute to the diversity of the host country and thus also increase tolerance and understanding in the society.

Body

Some immigration policies of developed countries

- **European Union**
 - Divergent national approaches to accepting Asylum Seekers.
 - Using EU budgets to support refugee integration.
 - Strengthening external borders.
 - Collaborating with third countries to cut off transit routes.
 - Tying Foreign Assistance to stemming migration
- Hungary has restricted illegal immigration by suspending the acceptance of asylum seekers sent back to it by other EU states.
- U.S. has also made some changes in its Immigration policy.
- Italy has called for detention and deportation of migrants, who it blames for the instability and threats in the country.
- Dutch has adopted a zero tolerance approach towards those immigrants who are unwilling to sign up to the country's way of life.

As per UN report, India is leading country of origin of international migrants with a 17.5 million strong diaspora.

Effect of immigration policies of developed countries on India

- Recent merit-based immigration system of US — one that admits people who are skilled – has been welcomed by Indian professionals.
- Remittances of India hit adversely. Ex: Kerala remittance was nearly 40% of their GDP in 2011-2014 but after that there was sharp decline in remittances.
- It will increase unemployment as people who are not getting jobs overseas needs job in India.
- When it comes to the IT industry, due to immigration policies like H-1B Visa of U.S, initially the Indian companies will be pressurized to hire Indian talent, but eventually, it will help in overall growth.
- Due to strict immigration policies of west India can attract more talent. Make in India program can get thrust due to this.

Conclusion

Immigration policies of developed countries poses challenges in short term. However with skill development and New Industrial Policy India can gain advantage out of the situation.

24. Examine the significance of an effective exit policy in the greater discourse of liberalisation in India. What measures have been taken by the government on this front? Are they effective? Critically examine.

Introduction:

The introduction of reforms in India and the consequent liberalisation of the economy has exposed the entrepreneurs to an ever increasing competition. One of the important sets of policy measures since then relates to reforms in the labour sector of which the EXIT policy remains unaddressed.

Body

- The term 'exit' means the right of an industrial unit to close down. Exit policy means the policy regarding the retrenchment of the surplus labour force resulting from restructuring of industrial units and workers displaced by the closure of sick units.
- Exit may become necessary due to strategic reasons, financial constraints and environmental changes. Therefore, exit policy refers to the policy concerned with the action to be taken regarding surplus manpower in companies, owing to a variety of reasons, such as, restructuring, retrenchment, closure, or technological developments.

The significance of an effective exit policy in India is due to the following factors:

- Closure of sick units would be beneficial for the country's economy. Banks, financial institutions, state governments and the central government would be freed from the burden of providing incentives, subsidies and other concessions to keep the sick units going, the resources so saved can be invested for the growth of healthy units.
- An exit policy will ensure that the legitimate dues of displaced workers are paid to them speedily and satisfactorily. Without such a policy, these workers have to lose their dues.
- Closure of sick units may cause temporary unemployment. But the investment made out of the sale proceeds would create permanent employment.
- Maintenance of sick units provides more benefit to inefficient and corrupt employers responsible for sickness than to the workers.
- Sick units will ultimately close down exit policy or no exit policy.
- Several countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia have carried out economic reforms with exit policies. The result of such policies has been encouraging. A similar policy would be beneficial for India.
- Integration of an economy with the world economy would be incomplete without an exit policy. Indian companies would face a competitive disadvantage in the absence of freedom to retrench surplus labour.
- In the absence of an exit policy, labour is the biggest loser. The legitimate interests of workers are protected, only when there is a legal closure of a sick unit.

A well-laid out exit route should be provided both in the interest of workers and the economy.

Some of the measures introduced with regards to Exit policy in India include:

Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)-

- The most important measure is the introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme(VRS). It is the most humane technique to provide overall reduction in the existing strength of the employees. It is also known as 'Golden Handshake' as it is the golden route to retrenchment.

National Renewal Fund (NRF)-

- The government of India created this fund on February 4, 1992 to provide a safety net for labour. The fund would provide assistance for retraining and redeployment of labour arising as a result of modernization and technology upgradation and also provide compensation to workers.

Scheme of Counselling, Retraining and Redeployment (CRR) of rationalized employees of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs)-

- The objective and scope of the scheme is to provide opportunities of counselling, retraining and redeployment to the rationalized employees of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) rendered redundant as a result of modernization, technology upgradation and manpower restructuring in the Central PSEs.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016-

- The RBI is using this to force banks to get tough with defaulting promoters, forcing them to sell assets to repay debts and make their companies solvent. This is a revolutionary change.
- The larger question of effectiveness of these measure's is muddled due to procedural deficiencies, bureaucratic red-tapism as well as legacy of the license permit raj system. IBC has been a welcome exception where-in larger insolvency proceedings have been effective while the issues of small and medium entities remain thus affecting the Exit mechanism and labour issues.
- At the same time, it is important to note that Exit policy is not the ideal remedy for tackling industrial sickness. It may benefit employers as they siphon off funds from old units to newer ones.
- To minimise the adverse effects of closure of a unit on labour, several options like social security nets, insurance schemes and other employee benefit schemes have been in place which have been successful to an extent.

Conclusion

There is no specific policy or law dealing with exit, and the actions are governed under the existing laws and regulations as and where they are applicable. However, the exit policy is gradually coming under formation and informed opinion is that a time may come when there will be adequate political will to enact and implement it.

25. Do you think a National Land Use Policy should be formulated urgently? Substantiate your views.**Introduction**

The National Land Use Policy is necessary to achieve improvement of livelihood, food and water security, and best possible realization of various developmental targets so as to ensure sustainable development of India. There was draft National land utilisation policy formed in 2013.

Body

To ensure optimal utilisation of the limited land resources in India for addressing social, economic and environmental considerations and to provide a framework for the States to formulate their respective land utilisation policies incorporating state specific concerns and priorities.

Necessity of National Land Use Policy:

- Unregulated land use shifts: the net sown areas in the country have increased from 41.8% to almost 51%, the forest areas have increased from 14.2% to almost 23%, and the areas under non-agriculture uses, which include industrial complexes, transport network, mining, heritage sites, water bodies and urban and rural settlements has also increased, since 1950. These increases of land use as above have lead to reduction of land use elsewhere. During the same period, the “other areas” that include barren & un-culturable land, other uncultivated land excluding fallow land and fallow lands have drastically decreased by nearly half.
- Reduction in per capita uses of land resources: Protection of agricultural lands from land use conversions so as to ensure food security and to meet consumption needs of a growing population and to meet livelihood needs of the dependent population.
- Urbanisation demands: According to the world population prospects by the United Nations, 55% population of India will be urban by the year 2050. The demand for non-farm land use will increase further in future. There is a need for appropriate land utilisation and management strategy and land use planning to cater to the growing urbanisation needs. There is scope for re-densification, proper augmentation of land under municipal corporations, PSUs.

- Meeting industrialisation demands: The industrial development occupies a lot of land. The industrial development is associated with supportive development which also requires considerable amounts of land.
- Protection of social interests: To identify and protect lands that are required to promote and support social development, particularly of tribal communities and poor section of society for their livelihood.
- Protection of heritage: To preserve historic and cultural heritage by protecting, places/sites of religious, archaeological, scenic and tourist importance.
- Protecting lands under natural resources and ecosystem services: To preserve and conserve lands under important environmental functions such as those declared as National Parks, Wild Life Sanctuaries, Reserved Forests, Eco Sensitive Zones, etc. and guide land uses. To preserve the areas of natural environment and its resources that provides ecosystem services.

As there is continuous stress on land resource in India as around 17% of world population has only 2.4% of world land area.

- Nearly 30% of its land area in India, as much as the area of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra put together, has been degraded through deforestation, over-cultivation, soil erosion and depletion of wetlands.
- This land loss is not only whittling away India's gross domestic product by 2.5% every year and affecting its crop yield, but also exacerbating climate change events in the country which, in turn, are causing even greater degradation.
- Recognition of the customary tenure of indigenous people who have knowledge about local ecosystems like forests, and involving them in the decision-making and governance can help advance the efforts against climate change. "Insecure land tenure affects the ability of people and communities" to fight climate change, said the IPCC report.
- An ongoing case in the Supreme Court of India also threatens to evict 2 million forest dweller families whose Forest Rights claims have been rejected. Currently, 21 state governments are in the process of reviewing all the rejected claims.
- Land pollution due to excessive use of chemical fertilisers, biocides (pesticides, insecticides and herbicides), polluted liquids and solids from urban and industrial areas, forest fires, water-logging and related capillary processes, leaching, drought.

Detailed National land utilisation policy could help to do away all aforementioned issues regarding land use in India.

Conclusion

There is urgent need to formulate National land use policy with perspective of 'New India' to minimise land use conflicts or negative environmental impacts. For implementation of land utilisation policy, all concerned at different levels, viz. national, state, regional and local should suggest a general implementation framework and undertake capacity building.

26. It is an irony that despite having a huge buffer stock, one of the largest public distribution systems and excessive subsidisation, India performs poorly on the Global Hunger Index. Comment.

Introduction:

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool that measures and tracks hunger globally, by region, and by country. The GHI is calculated annually, and its results appear in a report issued in October each year.

Body

The GHI is based on four indicators:

- **Undernourishment:** the share of the population that is undernourished (insufficient caloric intake)
- **Child wasting:** the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition)
- **Child stunting:** the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition)
- **Child mortality:** the mortality rate of children under the age of five (in part, a reflection of the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments).

The reason for mapping hunger is to ensure that the world achieves “Zero Hunger by 2030” — one of the Sustainable Development Goals laid out by the United Nations. It is for this reason that GHI scores are not calculated for certain high-income countries.

GHI 2019 puts India at 102 out of 117 countries. In 2018, India was 103 out of 132. In 2017, due to a change in methodology, 44 more countries had been included and India was at 100 out of 119. So while the rank is one better this year, in reality, India is not better off in comparison to the other countries. The GHI slots countries on a scale ranging from “low” hunger to “moderate”, “serious”, “alarming”, and “extremely alarming”. India is one of the 47 countries that have “serious” levels of hunger.

Why poor performance

- With an overall score of 30.3, India finds itself sandwiched between Niger (score 30.2, rank 101) and Sierra Leone (score 30.4, rank 103). In 2000, India’s score was 38.8 and its hunger level was in the “alarming” category. Since then, India has steadily improved on most counts to reduce its score and is now slotted in the “serious” category. But the pace of India’s improvement has been relatively slow.
- For one, notwithstanding the broader improvements, there is one category — Child Wasting, that is, children with low weight for their height — where India has worsened. In other words, the percentage of children under the age of 5 years suffering from wasting has gone up from 16.5 in 2010 to 20.8 now. Wasting is

indicative of acute undernutrition and India is the worst among all countries on this parameter.

- The report also took note of open defecation in India as an impacting factor for health. It pointed out that as of 2015–2016, 90% of Indian households used an improved drinking water source while 39% of households had no sanitation facilities.
 - Open defecation jeopardizes the population's health and severely impacts children's growth and their ability to absorb nutrients.
- Around 90 per cent of children aged between 6 and 23 months in the country don't even get minimum required food.
- When it comes to stunting in children under five, India saw a dip, but it's still high — 37.9 per cent in 2019 from 42 per cent in 2010.
- One of the main reason is the lack of awareness among rural population about nutritional intake.

Conclusion

Though India has demonstrated an improvement in other indicators that includes, under-5 mortality rate, prevalence of stunting among children, and prevalence of undernourishment owing to inadequate food. The National Food Security Act, 2013, aims to achieve the objective of food security by providing affordable food grains to families living below the poverty line. In this way, the government seeks to achieve food security. The intent of the statute is laudable, but it still doesn't take the fuller picture of nutritional challenge into account. Malnutrition is the reason behind 69% of deaths of children in India. The situation is serious and calls for policy changes. Food security, in a complete sense, is the need of the hour. Unless a radical shift in policy approach doesn't come through, we will continue to stare at embarrassing statistical graphs and indices.

27. What is deep learning? Explain. What are its applications? Discuss.

Introduction

A Fourth Industrial Revolution is building as digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Artificial intelligence is a crucial part of this fourth industrial revolution. And Deep learning is one of the important aspects of Artificial Intelligence.

Body

Deep Learning is a subfield of machine learning concerned with algorithms inspired by the structure and function of the brain called artificial neural networks.

Deep learning (aka deep structured learning or hierarchical learning) is part of a broader family of machine learning methods based on learning data representations, as opposed to task-specific algorithms.

Deep learning neural network consists of two terms:

- 1) Neural networks, a biologically-inspired programming paradigm which enables a computer to learn from observational data.
- 2) Deep learning, a powerful set of techniques for learning in neural networks

Application of Deep learning

- Self-driving cars where the neural networks can be trained over parameters such as traffic patterns, traffic rules, weather and road quality etc. and it can self-improve to drive efficiently.
- Weather forecasting where training parameters could be wind pattern, air-pressure, temperature and previous weather records of the year etc. so that it could predict weather phenomena without human intervention.
- Automatic machine translation, deciphering complicated scripts and language modeling.
- Automatic Game Playing – A recent example is AlphaGo which beat the world champion.
- Examination of huge amount of space data to come out with patterns and new discoveries.
- Robotics and Internet of Things (IoT) are the areas that can significantly improve our interaction with outer world.
- Restoration of old paintings, identification through low resolution images, automatic music composing etc.
- Border management with hostile neighbourhood can be done through computer vision, including object recognition, etc. with minimal loss of life and property.
- Crime and investigations, huge pending cases are serious problem before Indian judiciary and administration. Machine learning can help in solving cases, bioinformatics and DNA profiling etc.

Conclusion

- There is huge potential for machine learning in realising the dream of new India but this will not happen until the personal biases mentioned previously, and these “greed” biases are addressed.
- It is also not recommended to completely rely on machines in certain sectors such as health and such other areas of human interface.
- It must be taken care that replacement of human with intelligent machines would not increase the socio-economic inequalities and deprivations in society

28. What is quantum computing? How can it change the way computers perform?

Examine.**Introduction**

Quantum computing is a new type of computing that relies on quantum physics unlike traditional computing which is based on binary processing of information. It uses 'qubit' built by the way of some objects behave at the subatomic level or at extremely cold temperature.

Body**Changing the computer performance:**

Exploiting the principles of quantum mechanics, quantum computing help computers to easily tackle computational problems that may be tough for the classical computer as the size of the numbers and number of inputs involved grows bigger. It uses the fundamental laws of quantum physics to perform an incomprehensible number of calculations simultaneously.

- Qubits: Unlike binary bits which can be either '1' or '0', qubit can be both '0' and '1' at the same time which is called quantum superposition. This helps the computer hold more information. Two qubits can hold four values at once. And as the number of qubits grows, a quantum computer becomes exponentially more powerful. E.g. Google's quantum computer 'Sycamore' took under 3 minutes for a calculation that would take a supercomputer 10,000 years.
- Quantum computing uses the principle of entanglement which means they can manipulate all their qubits simultaneously. Thus, instead of doing a set of calculations one after another, a quantum computer could do them all at the same time.
- Parallel computing: It can simulate several classical computers working in parallel and hence change the fundamental way of working of computers. E.g. Bell Labs in 1996 discovered that a quantum computer would be able to do a task with one thousand steps instead of a million taken by classical computer.
- Encryption and security: several encryption systems used in banking and security applications are premised on computers being unable to handle mathematical problems that are computationally demanding beyond a limit. With quantum computing, the way of computer encryption needs an upgradation. At the same time, quantum computing also can be a solution with quantum encryption methods that can be employed.
- Instead of troubleshooting issues bit by bit as we do now with classical computers, quantum computers tackle the entire problem at once. This opens the door for amazing developments in every field from financial services to our national security.

Quantum computers reduces the number of computers and hence reduce the physical space and energy requirements. With these advantages, it has applications in every field from AI, Banking, Defence applications, Big data analytics, Medicine and so on.

However, a more careful analysis show that quantum computing still has limitations specially in solving real time problems. There are still hardware issues, unique propensity to errors and are not as amenable to executing real world problems as super computers.

Conclusion

Thus, quantum computing is a revolution in the field of computing and is an upgrade of the present-day supercomputers. USA and China are taking lead in quantum computing. The need to invest in quantum computing researches is realized by India which has unveiled a programme called Quantum-Enabled Science & Technology (QuEST).

29. Space is the next big frontier of technological revolution. Do you agree? What are those current trends that indicate towards a highly sophisticated and advanced future of space technology? Explain.

Introduction

Space technology has been one of the defining forces of the 20th and 21st century. The Soviet launch of Sputnik in October 1957 and the ensuing space race to the moon came to symbolize countries demonstration of their prowess and global influence. These bright moments, including the Apollo moon landing, were evidence of space technologies lighting a clear path to the future and in recent times, it is on the cusp of a great technological revolution.

Body

- Since the days of its heroic endeavours, space engineering has matured into a series of interconnected technologies that deliver exciting new space science missions which in the present times are rendering great technological advancement in space as well as use on earth.
- By democratizing access to space-based resources, we can create a more humane and just world. But realizing these benefits requires overcoming complex technical, legal, political and regulatory challenges.
- Present times is seeing a wave of start-ups driving dramatic and ongoing reductions in launch costs with innovations such as reusable boosters. The second is the development of nano sats that are dramatically smaller, lighter and less expensive to build and launch than those typically used by governments or industry.
- Space is stepping up to the connectivity challenge posed by the fourth industrial revolution. One of the driving forces of this change has been the introduction of next-generation high-throughput satellite (HTS) systems. HTS will enhance the end user experience much like the terrestrial move from dial-up to broadband access.
- Space is quickly becoming a place where the industries that power our global economy will conduct business. Like any major change, this sharing economy in space faces major legal, regulatory and technical hurdles.

- Further, this change is being led by private enterprises unlike earlier governmental efforts, which makes it conducive to exponential growth in light of unlimited resources that the space economy provides.
- Space industry leading the technological revolution is evident from earlier precedent when technologies developed for Apollo and other missions had a spill over effect on various industries in the world. In present times, reusable rockets help in revolutionising transportation on earth is one such example
- At the same time, there will also be need for mechanisms to track and control satellites to prevent their being used for criminal or terrorist purposes, as well as finding ways to safely destroy failed satellites so they don't cause damage to other satellites or space vehicles.

Following can be considered as some of the current trends that indicate a highly sophisticated and advanced future of space technology:

- The global mining industry has tumbled in recent years from a market value of more than \$1.6 trillion in 2010, to \$714 billion in 2016, but this may change quickly once the “global” definition of mining is transformed by the emerging space resource industry. Space resources can be extracted from celestial bodies, most notably asteroids and the Moon.
- Miniaturisation of technology has enabled a range of spacecraft sizes, such as the 100kg small satellites used for the Disaster Monitoring Constellation, which consists of a coordinated group of individual satellites. There are even compact 30x10x10cm CubeSats, satellites weighing a few kilograms, which can carry a range of different payloads.
- The ability to fabricate large, lightweight structures directly in orbit could have a huge impact on space technology, getting around the risky hurdle of launching delicate structures from the ground.
- Spirit and Opportunity were the two successful Mars rovers that helped humans with many discoveries on Mars and were advanced enough to be controlled from the Earth. Both of these rovers exceeded their 90-day expected lifetime by several years making them one of NASA's most successful inventions. Present missions are building upon these like Mars 2020 mission.
- Military and intelligence personnel have relied on satellite data for years to keep tabs on other nations and goings-on around the globe, but it was largely classified or otherwise restricted from the private sector. Now, looser regulations and lower costs are allowing companies to use that same kind of information for a variety of business reasons, such as near-real-time geospatial data visualizations of housing construction and other activity when planning new store locations.
- Space habitats will be launched from Earth initially, but as the resource supply chain expands and metals from asteroids and the Moon become available, this sector will also come to rely on resources sourced from space.

- In today's media-rich environment the concept of artificial intelligence is hard to miss, but its role in our space-based systems is easy to overlook. In fact, for some applications, it is already embedded. This will further help in the development of AI.

Conclusion

In the last few years, it has become clear that there is enormous potential to not only help bridge the technological shortcomings but to also create the means for new space based technological dividends. As with other cases in the new technological Revolution, these benefits coincide with the latest innovations in software, data processing and other booming sectors and it will be from the combinations of those pieces that the really innovative solutions will emerge to further advance human civilization into space.

30. What are the recent setbacks to global climate change negotiations? What can be its possible implications?

Introduction

A UN report released last month warned that the world is currently headed toward a 3.2 degrees temperature rise by the end of the century, highlighting the impending danger of climate change for world where recently fight against climate change has seen some serious setbacks which may aggravate the fragile situation further.

Body

- The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994. Its objective is to stabilise the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The Kyoto Protocol, which requires a limited number of developed country Parties to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions up to 2020, was adopted under the Convention in 1997.
- In order to address climate change more broadly, the Paris Agreement was negotiated and adopted in 2015. The goals of the Paris Agreement are to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, to pursue efforts to limit this increase to 1.5°C, to increase the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and to make finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.
- Under the Paris Agreement, Parties regularly communicate their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as part of the global response to climate change; the ambition of these contributions has to increase over time. The Paris Agreement also provides for a global stocktake which assesses the collective progress of all Parties towards achieving the goals of the agreement.
- In the previous climate change conference in Katowice in December 2018, the rules for the implementation of the Paris Agreement were largely defined. These include the information that Parties shall provide when communicating their NDCs, guidance

for accounting for NDCs, guidelines for reporting on mitigation, adaptation and support to developing countries, and rules for the global stocktake.

- However, agreement on some aspects is still pending, such as common timeframes for NDCs or detailed provisions for the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, mitigation actions and support. Most importantly, Parties still have to agree on the rules for voluntary cooperation between Parties, including the use of international carbon market mechanisms.
- One of the most serious setbacks in recent times seem to be the announcement in 2017 of USA to withdraw from Paris Agreement. In light of the fact that the United States was the first major economy that ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016 and is also the largest greenhouse gas emitter, it will have serious consequences on the effectiveness of global climate change negotiations.
- In addition, the United States cut its contributions to the UNFCCC process and its support to developing countries in the area of climate change mitigation and adaptation. As a consequence, activities under the UNFCCC such as reviews or capacity building had to be scaled down.
- In light of this, it will not be easy for the country to keep its promises intact. For example, India's participation in the agreement was conditional upon receiving financial aid from developed countries to reduce its carbon footprints. India accounts for four percent of global emissions and, at Paris, it promised "to reduce its carbon footprint by 35 percent from its 2005 levels by 2030."
- Furthermore, the recent UN climate talks in Madrid ended in stalemate, with the negotiations running two days over time as countries squabble over rules for a new global carbon trading market. The talks, known as COP25, ran for 14 days and set a record for the longest-ever climate negotiations, but failed to produce any agreement on trading in carbon credits.
- The failure of COP25 to agree on the carbon market rules will complicate the task facing the UK, which takes over the presidency of the next UN climate talks in Glasgow next year. Almost 200 countries failed to agree unanimously on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement rulebook concerning the carbon markets system,
- If China dominates future negotiations, the ongoing tensions between the two nations will have a significant impact on India's place in such negotiations. To meet its solar targets, India needs around USD 100 billion, and this sector has enormous potential for foreign investments. These challenges will be the result of the failure of negotiations.
- Furthermore, Authoritative surveys of the mitigation pledges adopted to date by different countries strongly suggest that these will fall far short of what is required to achieve the 2°C goal if the present state of deadlock between countries is continued.
- While the developed countries are bent on diluting the North-South divide, citing the growing economic and political clout of developing nations, developing countries like India insist on retaining equity. This is evident from the multiple rounds of negotiations at international forums.

Conclusion

Thus, recent developments at the international level have renewed claims that cooperation would be more effective under a less formal approach, driven by decisions taken at the national level, with greater flexibility to accommodate domestic circumstances and priorities while also effectively addressing the global needs.

31. What are the factors behind Australia's bushfires? Are such incidents prevalent in India? What is the strategy to mitigate bushfires/ forest fires? Discuss.

Introduction

Bushfires are a natural result of the hot, dry conditions of Australia's environment, particularly over summer. Importantly, they're also a normal part of Australia's ecosystem, with several native plants relying on them to regenerate and grow.

Body

Factors behind Australia's bushfires

- **Available fuel** – volume of bark, leaf litter and other natural dry material that is consumed by the fire as fuel.
- **Temperature and dryness** – Hot, dry fuel easily ignites. Australia's fire season is far more damaging in summer, when rain is scarce. Fires are also encouraged by hotter temperatures, because fuel will naturally be closer to its burning point, making ignition easy.
- **Wind speed** – Stronger winds bring more fuel into the path of fires, allowing them to grow bigger and spread. Winds are also able to create new fires via the transference of embers, which then ignite other patches around the original fire. This process is known as 'spotting' and can happen up to 30km away from a fire.
- **Humidity** – Plants become easily flammable at lower humidity because they lack the moisture to combat the heat.
- **Slope angle** – Fires operate on a convection and radiation basis, meaning that bushfires travelling uphill will spread faster than they do travelling downhill. Steepness is a factor in this, and may aid fire advancement

While all of these factors play a part in the ignition and spread of fires, they are aided by the rise of climate change, which has led to the drier, hotter conditions where bushfires thrive.

Forest fires in India

- The number of forest fires shot up to 14,107 from 4,225 between November 2018 and February 2019 according to the Real Time Forest Alert System of the Forest Survey of India (FSI).

- In February 2019, massive forest fires broke out in numerous places across the Bandipur National Park of the Karnataka state in India. While, forest fires very often occur naturally in the dry summer months, before the rains arrive; the carnage recently in Bandipur shows they are becoming more and more unpredictable with each passing year.
- The FSI data reveals that, in 2019, large wildfires raged across several states. Between January 1, 2019, and February 26, 2019, 209 out of 558 forest fires occurred in the five southern states of India — Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala. That is 37% of the fires.

Strategy to mitigate bushfires/ forest fires

- Construction of narrow lanes in the forest, at crucial junctions, to restrict forest fires.
- Special trainings to National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force in combating fire disasters.
- Coordination among various agencies like forest department, NDRF, state government, and Environment ministry to put off the fire at early stage itself.
- Scientific waste management techniques to avoid fires due to Methane Gas evolution, like the one happened in Deonar, Mumbai.
- Pre-fire alerts – alerts to concerned departments for immediate action about fire-prone forest areas.
- National action plan for forest fires.
- Satellite tracking of vulnerable areas, training local forest dwellers to be on vigil and sensitizing them against harmful practices.

Conclusion

Forest fire causes imbalances in nature and endangers biodiversity by reducing faunal and floral wealth. Traditional methods of fire prevention are not proving effective and it is now essential to deal with it holistically.

32. The China-Pakistan axis is a geo-strategic and security headache for India. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

The navies of China and Pakistan held their sixth bilateral naval exercise, titled Sea Guardians-2020, in the northern Arabian Sea. Such military exercises are expected to strengthen security cooperation between the two countries, who are already “iron brothers.” The growing bonhomie between China-Pakistan is beyond symbolism require India to adopt more vigilant and cautious approach.

Body:

The China-Pakistan axis has many underlying principles explained by Samuel Huntington as sinic-islamist alliance of power and culture along with traditional anti-India synergies.

Challenges posed by China-Pakistan axis at geostrategic horizon:

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: China is using Indian land area illegally occupied by Pakistan violating sovereignty of India. Though China always maintained Jammu and Kashmir is a bilateral issue, India has concerns over the internationalization of the Kashmir issue, reflected in criticism of removal of article 370.
- String of Pearls: Gwadar port of Pakistan can become outpost for PLA navy eventually along with massive port development surrounding India in Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh. Growing influence of China in the Indian Ocean major cause of worry for India.
- Afghanistan Peace process: China and Pakistan working in close cooperation to bring Taliban to table and exclude India from the political solution in Afghanistan, which will undermine Indian efforts, infrastructure and investments in Afghanistan.
- Threats to Indian interests overseas: China consistently blocking India's membership in Nuclear Supplier Group at the haste of Pakistan, first time 'informal consultations' on India-Pakistan dispute after 1971 due to Chinese initiative.

Security headache:

- Nuclear terrorism: China and Pakistan being nuclear states on the northern and western border make India country with one of the most hostile neighbours with Pakistan, India has unresolved Kashmir issue and with China India do not have mutually agreed boundary settlement. It necessities India to develop resilient security apparatus.
- Proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Punjab: Pakistan has continuously tried to destabilize India internally, with support to separatists.
- Moral support and Training to North-east militancy groups and Left wing extremism: China in the past provided safe havens, arms and training to northeast militant groups and moral support to left wing extremism.
- Radicalization and Fundamentalism: Pakistan has been the center of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism of the world. It has indulged in many terror attacks on Indian cities and China supported Pakistan in UN repeatedly reflected in repeated technical hold to designate JeM head Massod Azhar as terrorist who eventually declared so with consistent diplomatic efforts.

Indian response to China-Pakistan Axis:

- India has taken strong action against both China and Pakistan in the recent past with border stand-off with China in dock-lam and surgical strike and air strike in Pakistan.
- India refused to participate in Belt and Road Initiative of China becoming the only major economy.

- India increased Strategic relationship with US reflected in the development of Quad to counter China.
- India's proactive diplomacy in West Asia has dented support to Pakistan from Islamic world.

However, India has experienced the similar challenge in the US-Pakistan axis for more than five decade which eventually became blur with the consistent efforts of Indian diplomacy, economic might and changing global order.

Conclusion:

India cannot have idealistic view of China as if the economic interest in India will dominate the geostrategic and security ambitions vis-e-vis relationship with India. Indian approach should be to develop more deep relationship with China to make Pakistan more responsible state and at the same time focus on building economic power and strategic alliances across the globe to increase deterrence.

33. The giants in the field of internet and social media like Google, Amazon, Facebook etc are based out of India. How does it pose a security threat to India?

Introduction

Social media has emerged as one of the national security concern in India during Assam riots and mass exodus of northeast Indian from major Indian cities to the recent violent student protests and mob lynching incidents in India. It has been observed that foreign base of internet and social media giants pose challenge to efficient monitoring and deterrence against security threats to India.

Body:

India has faced many security issues with the use of Social Media in recent past like rioting, lynching, recruitment for terror organization and radicalization by fundamental group.

Security threats due to out of India Internet and Social Media giants:

- Indian laws are ill-equipped to deal with social media giants due to their location. At most India can only censure the giants and ask cooperation, taking hasty steps to ban such multinationals like China way will dent India's image as vibrant democracy and liberal economy.
- India neither has technology infrastructure nor sufficient able manpower to categories private, sensitive data of Indians and control outward flow.
- Indian data highways are outward directed due to exponential increase of social media use with more than one billion mobile phones and increasing digital inclusion

create threat of profiling Indian citizen data for various purposes like economic and social behavior of India by foreign country.

- Major Complicating Factors to secure the networks and Media Much of the hardware and software that make up the communications ecosystem is sourced externally.
- End to End encryption used in phones to send and receive messages, restricts the government's ability to monitor and increases the threat of terrorism and crimes of trafficking, smuggling.
- Open source intelligence creation for foreign intelligence networks with optimal processing.

However, India has taken various measures to increase surveillance and monitoring such as – National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) of India. It has also appointed BN Srikrishna Committee to review data protection in India.

Need to follow principle of Data Localization:

- As per BN Srikrishna committee recommendation, Personal data will need to be stored on servers located within India, and transfers outside the country will need to be subject to safeguards. Critical personal data, however, will only be processed in India.
- Cross border transfer of data must be subject to model contract clauses on the lines of General Data Protection Regulation of EU.

Conclusion:

There is need to increase digital literacy of Indians and increase awareness about potential threats posed by cyber security to both individual and nation as a whole. India should focus its energy on development of critical technologies to monitor data flow and become pioneer in new technology development with economic capacity to establish its own social media and internet giants.

34. How is fake news a grave internal security threat? Explain.

Introduction

Fake news is news, stories or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers. Usually, these stories are created to either influence people's views, push a political agenda or cause confusion and can often be a profitable business for online publishers.

It contravenes with the fundamental right to have informed choices and once exposed to it, the credibility of genuine news is decreased. Fake news can create adverse opinion for any subject or material and has the potential to be efficiently used for malafide

propaganda. Mob lynchings in India, influence on US Presidential Election in 2016 and tension between Pak-Israel are clear cut results of fake news across the world.

Body

Dangers of fake news for internal security

It is misleading people, spreading false propaganda or maligning people as well as entire communities. It can severely impact the social, political and economic stability of a country.

The rapid spread of false information through social media is among the emerging risks identified by the World Economic Forum in its Global Risks 2013 Report.

- Fake can break the fraternity among citizens. It sparks panic and raises conflicts. Eg – Cauvery dispute when malicious rumors and fake news led to the antagonism.
- Communal tensions may develop as deliberately created content appeals to passions.
- Acting upon the fake news circulated through social media, the incidents of mob lynching have increased across the country.
- This is a severe threat to the security as victims are mostly from minority community and perpetrator is faceless mob. Thus security agencies can not act definitively.
- Fake news has the ability to create lasting hatred among various sections of society.
- It's used to vilify the image of political rivals while impacting democratic right to choose the right candidate.
- The extremists and fundamentalist groups are using fake news as a tool for spreading unrest in the society in Kashmir, North East, and Maoist infested areas.
- It has the prospects of destabilizing the markets and causing huge losses to the country.
- A simple fake news can make people run for their money from banks causing mass panic and causing law and order situations.

Conclusion

National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), Central Monitoring System (CMS), Internet Spy System Network and Traffic Analysis System (NETRA) of India, National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIPC) of India, National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) of India, Tri Service Cyber Command for Armed Forces of India are some of the step taken by India that will help to curb fake news.