Q1. India is going to have a new parliament. Where does the proposed design of the building take inspiration from? Discuss.

Approach

As the directive here is discuss it is necessary to write in detail all aspects of the proposed design of the new parliament building also there should be a brief mention of the importance of the parliament in a democracy like India and the role parliament has played in making a largest successful democracy of the world also how this new building will fulfil country's aspirations.

Introduction

Parliament is a central feature of a successful democracy. It is a place where people's aspirations are given a shape. Old parliament building gave India a direction where millions were taken out of poverty and rights and dignity was ensured. Old Parliament building gave a new direction to India after independence. New building will be a witness to building of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Body

Need for a new parliamentary building –

- The idea of a new structure for Parliament is not a recent one — two former Speakers highlighted this need as the number of parliamentary staff, security personnel, media visitors, and parliamentary activities have seen a steep rise. During a Joint Session, the Central Hall is jam-packed and a few MPs have to sit on additionally-arranged chairs.
- Since Parliament is a heritage building, there are severe limitations to the structural repair, alteration and modifications that can be made. The existing Parliament building lacks several safety features such as earthquake-proofing, a standard fireproofing system and also has inadequate office space.
- Article 81 of the Indian Constitution provides for the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies. Since the last delimitation exercise was conducted based on the 1971 census, the ongoing freeze on increasing the state-wise distribution of seats will end in 2026. Subsequently, the number of MPs will undoubtedly increase, which poses an urgent demand for appropriate arrangements for the upcoming legislators

Proposed design and inspiration –

- Under the Central Vista redevelopment project, the new Parliament building is an indigenous design compared to the old building which was designed by Edwin Lutyens and Hebert Baker who were both British.

- The new parliament building will have a triangular shape to reflect the importance of triangles being a sacred geometry in various religions signifying India's multireligious and secular traditions.
- The interiors will have three national symbols as their main themes-Lotus, peacock, and Banyan tree.
- The ceiling of the parliament has fresco paintings like that in Rashtrapati Bhawan taking inspiration from the traditional temples and designs.
- The interior walls will have shlokas inspired from the old parliament building.
- Dholpur stone will be used which again oozes traditional design along with the artistry of our multicultural society.
- Also, the new building will be a state-of-the-art structural design with all the new technological features which will withstand the aspirations for another 150 years.
- The new building will be environment friendly with 30% its energy needs to be fulfilled from renewable sources.

Concerns –

- Central Vista has been accorded the highest Grade 1 heritage status by the Unified Building Bye-Laws of Delhi. Grade 1 classified buildings cannot be changed, and "no intervention can be made unless it is in the interest of strengthening and prolonging the life of the buildings."
- The Opposition, environmentalists, architects and citizens have raised many concerns even before the pandemic brought in extra issues. They have questioned the lack of studies to ascertain the need for the project and its impact on the environment, traffic and pollution. But, several key approvals for the proposed Parliament building have been pushed during the lockdown. This led to allegations of a lack of transparency.
- They have questioned the lack of studies to ascertain the need for the project and its impact on the environment, traffic and pollution.

Conclusion

India has imbibed democratic values and these are a part of our cultural ethos —be it the 12th-century Anubhava Mandapa of Bhagwan Basava or Buddhism from the sixth century BCE onwards, which taught liberty, equality and fraternity to the world. B R Ambedkar, chairman of the Constitution's draft committee, lucidly elaborated these facts during the Constituent Assembly debates. The US's present parliamentary building was constructed within 25 years of its independence; it took 70 years to build its parliament. In 1988, Australia proudly dedicated its new parliament building in Canberra. Thus, it is imperative to undertake this historical exercise to develop our post-colonial people's Parliament. This glorious project will depict India's democratic tradition and represent India as the mother of democracy in a real sense.

Q2. Do you agree with the assertion that building heritage is an ongoing process? In this context, share your views on the proposal to build statues of historical personalities like Shivaji Maharaj.

Approach

You need to provide your view with regards to efforts for building heritage as being an ongoing process in the first part while in second part, you need to share your views on the proposals to build statues of historical personalities like Shivaji Maharaj. Also, views should be properly substantiated rather than just being comments.

Introduction

The Indian sub-continent is endowed with the richest and the most diverse stock of cultural and architectural heritage, with a significant proportion of them constituting living monuments. Traditional construction materials and practices are still used in renovation of heritage structures along with a recent focus towards constructing new heritage structure's to fulfil the needs and aspirations of present times, some of which are reflected in construction of grand statues.

Body

Yes, building heritage is an ongoing process as –

- The modern understanding of heritage is fluid and dynamic. At its core, it represents a holistic understanding that perceives heritage as "a social and political construct encompassing all those places, artefacts and cultural expressions inherited from the past."
- They are seen to reflect and validate our identity as nations, communities, families and even individuals, and thus are worthy of respect and protection as well as new efforts towards rejuvenating these ideas.
- Today heritage is perceived far more broadly than was the case by previous generations —including the pioneers of the preservation movement — as is its protection and safeguarding for future generations which also necessitates new heritage structures for the future generations to highlight our age.
- Further, building heritage doesn't necessarily mean they won't serve public utility or be a wasteful expenditure as every heritage structure of past served some practical function in its days and same will be the case in present times with aesthetic considerations of its times.

Every society decides what is and isn't heritage. Since every collective decision involves politics, the construction of heritage too is deeply political. Political considerations also involve prioritising competing interests, which need to be balanced, where –

- Limited resources need to be allotted to safeguard and conserve present heritage structures rather than constructing new ones.
- Socio-economic condition of vast section of our population in present times also raises questions on allocation function in terms of monetary costs for building new heritage.

In this context, the proposal to build statues of historical personalities like Shivaji Maharaj can be understood from the following points –

- People care for heritage like statues because it contributes to and enhances our collective self-understanding. Further, it helps in focusing on personalities which embody our civilizational heritage as well as virtuous human conduct.
- Statues affirm our collective identity, is a source of pride. It is that part of history which is continuously brought to life by artefacts, integrated with our lived collective experience. And because it directly touches identity, it evokes strong feelings.
- Statue construction involves ethics too. It is the valued past of societies: intangible, preserved say, in narratives, music or performances but also tangible, materially embodied in statues where a grander scale helps in identifying with the noble virtues of the historical personality involved.
- Integral to the construction of statue then is an assessment of what must be remembered and forgotten, what calls for respect and celebration and what is a 'stain' remembered only to be prevented in future. Raj Ghat is not only a place where we remember Gandhi but also where we mourn his assassination by one of his own countrymen.
- Heritage is a way of addressing and rectifying past wrongs. The Holocaust memorial in Berlin and Washington's Vietnam memorial are both gestures towards reparation, monuments of public apology.

But at the same time, there are multiple concerns with regards to recent spree of announcements to build statues across India, some of these concerns are –

- The major problem is recouping the investment from tourism. The Taj Mahal, India's most famous moment, draws in millions of dollars in revenue each year, but even should the Shivaji Maharaj statue achieve the same benchmark, it will take decades to break even.
- Aside from the cost of construction, the expenditure for ongoing maintenance will be a vacuum on government revenue. Funding for the project will aggravate the already troubled debt situation.
- Public display of the heritage of only a few is a source of profound estrangement and exclusion for others. Heritage is often linked to cultural domination that invites resistance. It follows that heritage is that which brings comfort or unease, to which people are either attracted or repulsed.
- In societies where caste hierarchies abound, the continual denial of public recognition to Dalit symbols leads to demands of greater inclusion of their heritage. And when after struggles for recognition, Ambedkar's statues finally

make their way into public spaces, many see vandalism during times of social tension.

- With one of the largest stocks of heritage structures in the world, lack of adequate quality and quantity of manpower is a serious bottleneck in India in addressing the task of understanding and protecting heritage structures from natural hazards, ageing and weathering effects. Thus, focus should be on conservation of existing heritage structures and statues.

Also, our persistent obsession with political power, begs the question of why is there no movement to erect statues of M.S. Subbulakshmi, Kumar Gandharva, or Begum Akhtar for their massive contribution to our cultural heritage?

Conclusion

People must have the first priority in cultural heritage, not objects. A holistic understanding of the heritage is at stake, where the complexity of heritage should be taken into account and a balance should be brought in public discourse to ensure effective utilization of public funds as well as highlight the role of historical figures through appropriate means.

Q3. Do you think unbridled freedom on social media platforms can undermine democracy? Critically comment.

Approach

As the directive in the question is critically comment it is necessary to mention both positive and negative aspects of freedom on social media undermining democracy. Also answer should depict multi dimensionality of points covering all aspects the way social media impacts democracy in both positive and negative ways.

Introduction

Public participation is the bedrock of a successful and vibrant democracy. Debates, discussions and a healthy exchange of ideas go a long way in strengthening the foundations of democratic systems. Countries across the globe took to newer modes of public communication even as their democracies kept evolving.
Social media has been the new tool in the hands of people it has played a big role in changing the way democracies used to function earlier by giving access to every individual to have his say and change the discourse.

Body

Is unbridled freedom on social media undermining democracy?
Arguments in favour –

- The rise of polarizing and divisive content has been a defining moment of modern politics, which is fed by fake news propagation through social media channels.
- Further, dissemination of fake news through social media, among populations with low-to-no levels of critical digital literacy is a big challenge.
- In India, the spread of fake news has occurred mostly with relation to political and religious matters. However, misinformation related to COVID-19 pandemic was also widely circulated.
- Fake news spread through social media in the country has become a serious problem, with the potential of it resulting in mob violence
- Social media has enabled a style of populist politics, which on the negative side allows hate speech and extreme speech to thrive in digital spaces that are unregulated, particularly in regional languages
- The impact social media platforms are having on influencing elections in the US are also evident. In addition to social media posts, many voters have reported receiving text messages and emails that are nothing but disinformation campaigns about the presidential candidates and what they stand for.
- Recent incidents of disinformation campaign against the Agriculture reform laws and citizenship amendment act, on social media understated the real objectives behind such reforms.

Arguments against –

- Democratization of Expression: Social media has made Indian politics more inclusive by allowing citizens, who were traditionally excluded from politics due to geography and demography, to gain direct entry into the political process.
- It has also allowed for a diversity of viewpoints and public engagement on an unprecedented scale
- Making political communication people-centric: Social media has been increasingly used by Indian political actors for routine political communication between elections to provide unmediated and direct communication to connect citizenry.
- Social media can be used for greater political participation, The Election Commission of India recently launched an app to encourage voter mobilisation.
- Increasing access to political information through the mass media may enable citizens to monitor incumbents' behaviour, and use this information in voting decisions. Exposure to debates improve voters' political knowledge and the alignment between voters' reported policy positions and those of the candidates they voted for.

Conclusion

In recent years internet has expanded exponentially to every corner of the world. With rise in social media and its penetration, a wave of 'mediatisation' of Indian politics i.e., the media's ability to set political agendas has expanded, and elections have been transformed into an image contest between prominent personalities. As media and politics grow ever more intertwined, media exposure has impacted voting behaviours and opinions. This Demand strong measures and regulation by the government.

Q4. What role does a predictable tax policy play in ease of doing business? Discuss. In this light, examine the critical issues affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India.

Approach

The question can be addressed in two parts where the first part should discuss the role of predictable tax policy in ease of doing business while the second part should examine important issues affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India.

Introduction

To foster economic growth and development governments need sustainable sources of funding for social programs and public investments. To achieve the common goal of a prosperous, functional and orderly society, taxation is not only for public goods and services; it is also a key ingredient in the social contract between citizens and the economy, where a predictable taxation policy helps in overall improvement in compliance.

Body

- The ease of doing business in any country is influenced by a number of factors. A material consideration among these is the stability and predictability of a country's taxation system, together with the ease of discharging a taxpayer's tax obligations.
- Over the years, the Indian taxation landscape has been characterized by ambiguous legislation posing interpretational challenges, an aggressive revenue administration that has sought to interpret taxation provisions in a manner prejudicial to the taxpayer. For example, recent verdicts in favour of multinationals like Vodafone and Cairn Energy are cases in point.
- The uncertainty regarding retrospective taxation is an issue on the minds of investors and there is a real danger it will undermine the message that India is open for investment. It is imperative for India to have a non-adversarial tax administration which is both investor and assesse friendly.
- Governments must provide a fiscal climate within which electronic commerce can flourish, weighed against the obligation to operate a fair and predictable taxation system that provides the revenue required to meet the legitimate expectations of citizens for publicly provided services.
- Rules that enhance the predictability of economic interactions and provide contractual partners with essential protections against arbitrariness and abuse.
- Such rules are much more effective in shaping the incentives of economic agents in ways that promote growth and development where they are reasonably efficient in design, are transparent and accessible to those for whom they are intended and can be implemented at a reasonable cost.

- The quality of the rules also has a crucial bearing on how societies distribute the benefits and finance the costs of development strategies and policies

Although the current government has attempted to convey to investors across the world that theirs is a government where the decisions will be fair, transparent and within the four corners of the law, there are many issues which are affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India, some of these are –

- In a recently conducted USISPF survey of CEOs of MNCs to gauge investment sentiments of businesses in India, unanimously listed good governance, transparency, predictable tax policy framework, ease of doing business, infrastructure and cost advantage as reasons for choosing alternate countries for their investments.
- Delayed Administrative Mechanisms: A study mentions that in India, it takes over 250-254 hours annually to complete tax procedures for businesses. Another bottleneck faced by the Indian economy has been the lack of uniform policies amongst Indian states.
- Dispute Resolution: Similarly, delays in dispute resolution which take up to 1445 days to be resolved as opposed to only 164 days to resolve a dispute in Singapore, have also dampened India's attractiveness for MNCs.
- Quality infrastructure is critical for the sound functioning of an economy because it plays such a central role in determining the location of economic activity and the kinds of sectors that can develop. India lacks quality infrastructure, except few regions.
- Productivity of capital: Long-term changes in technology can influence the attractiveness of investment. In the late nineteenth century, new technologies meant firms had a strong incentive to invest in this new technology because it was much more efficient than previous technology. If there is a slowdown in the rate of technological progress, firms will cut back investment as there are lower returns on the investment.
- A healthy workforce is vital to an economy's competitiveness and productivity—investing in the provision of health services is essential for both economic and moral reasons. In this regard, the Global Hunger Index necessitates India improve vastly.
- Basic education increases the efficiency of each worker, and good-quality higher education and training allow economies to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products.

Conclusion

Recent times have seen improvement in India's overall efforts towards facilitating investors and businesses, which is evident from WTO's Trade Policy Review (TPR) which appreciated India's goods and services tax, reforms on taxation, trade facilitation and improving the ease of doing business, and liberalised regimes for FDI and intellectual property rights.

Q5. What role has community engagement by ASHA workers played behind India's successful COVID response? Discuss.

Approach

As the derivative is discuss so it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion.

Introduction

Asha workers (an acronym that translates as "hope" in Hindi), along with the volunteer Anganwadi workers, and the more qualified ANMs, form the backbone of community healthcare in India. They are hired by the states and their salaries paid by funds from the central and state governments. Nearly all of them are women. Recently the second report of a WHO-established independent panel to study global responses to the pandemic said that Community engagement by ASHA workers has been a successful strategy in enhancing India's national response to Covid-19. It has highlighted how the deployment of "a cadre of million women social health activists" has helped India's Covid-19 surveillance.

Body

ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY ASHA WORKERS BEHIND INDIA'S SUCCESSFUL COVID RESPONSE –

- While many Indians have shifted to work-from-home during the lockdown, not much has changed for ASHAS. If anything, they have additional COVID duties over and above their regular tasks.
- Their core responsibilities such as distributing iron tablets, checking on immunisation schedules of babies and pregnant women, undertaking periodic checks on tuberculosis (tb) patients, among others, have been supplemented with additional duties of contract tracing, spreading awareness on prevention of COVID, keeping a close watch on incoming migrant workers to ensure they follow quarantine protocol and reporting suspected COVID cases.
- Despite the lockdown and other curbs on movement, ASHAS are performing their duties to the fullest. They are working tirelessly to prevent COVID transmission while also ensuring that the delivery of other health services remains uninterrupted.
- Asha workers are volunteers who receive honorariums and incentives in lieu of their work. However, 64 per cent respondents claim to have received no incentives for the COVID-related responsibilities undertaken by them. Only 43 per cent ASHAS are receiving their monthly honorariums on a regular basis.

- In a major exercise, 1.6 lakh accredited social health activists (ASHAS) have tracked in two phases over 30.43 lakh migrants who returned to Uttar Pradesh during the covid-19 lockdown and assisted the state government in contact tracing and community surveillance
- With the surge in the cases of covid-19 in the country and the influx of migrant population from hotspot areas, one of the major challenges in Uttar Pradesh was to cater to the healthcare needs of returnees and arrest the spread in its rural population. ASHAS have played a critical role in supporting the state's covid-19 management during this crisis.
- ASHAS have played a critical role in sensitising the communities about the preventive measures to be adopted such as regular hand washing with soap and water, importance of wearing masks when out in public spaces, and maintaining adequate physical distancing.
- ASHAS have assisted the Panchayati raj department in development of the community quarantine centres, in buildings like Anganwadi centres and primary schools. They have ensured adoption of Arogya Setu app at the community level through awareness generation and supporting in its installation
- As a result of their efforts, there has been enhanced awareness about essential and non-essential healthcare services and how to access these. The ASHAS are provided basic protective gear like masks, soaps and sanitizers as they go about their duties.
- The report cited ASHA workers in India for successfully using community engagement to respond to the pandemic.
- Community engagement has been a successful strategy to enhance national responses. This has included the deployment of community health workers; for example, India has drawn on a cadre of a million women social health activists.
- Asha workers were recruited under the national rural health mission (NHRM) that was launched in 2005. These workers act as a bridge between public healthcare and various communities. They are usually tasked with antenatal and care for new-born babies, encouraging immunisation, family planning and treating basic illnesses.
- Nearly 1 million other accredited social health activists (ASHAS) assigned to rural villages and small towns across India are on the front lines of the country's fight against corona virus.
- Every day, these activist goes door to door in search of potential covid-19 cases, working to get patients tested or to help them find treatment.

Conclusion

India's ASHA program is likely the world's largest army of all female community health workers. They are the foot soldiers of the country's health system. They have also played an essential role in India's efforts to eradicate polio and increase immunization, according to numerous studies.

Q6. What are the key privacy issues emerging with respect to social media platforms? Discuss.

Approach

The focus has to be on the privacy issues regarding the social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and other channels. The answer has to largely include the personnel data protection concerns and ways social networking platforms should use to ensure personal data protection.

Introduction

Back in 2016, it is claimed that the Trump-Era started at the back of using the data provided by Facebook to Cambridge Analytica forcing people to develop views in sync with their demand. The privacy issues of social media platforms have been raised many times since, till the recent culmination of change in privacy policy of a popular messaging application-WhatsApp (Facebook Subsidiary). In the backdrop of these issues there has been a continuous effort towards data protection in India as well, Government of India also came up with white paper on data protection and a bill on data protection is initial stages of becoming a permanent law.

Body

Social networks have become a part of human life. Starting from sharing information like text, photos, messages, many have started share latest news, and news related pictures in the Media domain, question papers, assignments, and workshops in Education domain, online survey, marketing, and targeting customers in Business domain, and jokes, music, and videos in Entertainment domain. Because of its usage by Internet surfers in all possible ways, even we would mention the social networking media as the current Internet culture. While enjoying the information sharing on Social Medias, yet it requires a great deal for security and privacy.

Issues with privacy –

- **Data mining –** Every one leaves trail behind while using any of the social media networking platform. Every time someone creates a new social media account, they provide personal information that can include their name, birthdate, geographic location, and personal interests. In addition, companies collect data on user behaviours: when, where, and how users interact with their platform. All of this data is stored and leveraged by companies to better target advertising to their users. Sometimes, companies share users' data with third-party entities, often without users' knowledge or consent.
- **Phishing Attempts –** Phishing is one of the most common ways criminals attempt to gain access to sensitive personal information. Often in the form of an email, a text message, or a phone call, a phishing attack presents itself as a message from a legitimate organization. These messages trick people into

sharing sensitive data, including passwords, banking information, or credit card details. Phishing attacks often pose as social media platforms.

- **Identity Theft –** Identity theft is a type of attack on social networking platforms which the adversary attempts to collect personal information of social media users so that he can impersonate the victim of the attack in order to gain some benefits or harm the victim.

- **Cyber terrorism –** The biggest challenge for internal security of nation through social networking site is cyber terrorism. Social networking sites also invite fraudsters to take excellent opportunity to become wealthy by applying deceiver schemes. Internet media is a major resource for developing serious crime. As Internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to present fraudulent plans in many ways.

- **Organised crime –** Social networking sites also pose major challenge in financial and organized crime which destabilizes the system. The organized criminal groups have found in social networks a forum to position themselves in the popular culture as an alternative lifestyle. Nowadays, the Internet reveals all the things that used to be hidden, and has become the platform of organized criminal groups to prove their power and profits with impunity. The international media has given the opportunity to take a look at the lifestyles of the so-called "narcojuniors", that is second generation of drug traffickers that have inherited the leadership of large criminal organizations.

- **Criminal Activity and Money laundering –** Internet Media is a major resource for developing serious crime. As Internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to present fraudulent plans in many ways. Social networking sites also pose major challenge in financial and organized crime which destabilizes the system. It creates threat to a company's security because of what employees might disclose and they are on prime target for cyber criminals.

- **Hacking –** Hackers use computer programs to attack the target computer. By using Social Media, hackers breach the national security and steal important data of defence or other strategic sectors. This can kneel the whole country without using Arms and Ammunition.

Conclusion

In a globalised society media becomes a lethal weapon against the enemy, and the populace as well. Information, as an element of soft power, is a strategic instrument within the context of grand strategy. There should be judicious use of social media. But we will have to mull steps to check its misuse for creating internal security threat to Nation. Social Media, with all its benefits and the potential for more, is definitely a boon to our world, however misuse or irresponsible usage can have negative effects on an internal security. We need to guard against the negative impact of the social media, which ought to be used in the correct manner for creative or productive purposes so that it is progressive to mankind and society at large, rather than regressive.

Q7. What according to you have been the two most landmark amendments to the Indian Constitution in the 21st century? Substantiate.

Approach

As the derivative is substantiate so it necessitates an explanation in which you have to give evidence or provide information to prove that something is true

Introduction

Under Article 368 of the Indian Constitution, the Parliament is empowered to amend it and its procedures. Amendments to the Indian Constitution are not easy to produce and require compliance with other provisions. Article 368 grants Parliament some powers allowing it to amend it while keeping its fundamental form just the same. In 73 years of Indian Independence, the constitution has been amended 104 times.

Body

THE TWO MOST LANDMARK AMENDMENTS TO THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY –

1. **THE CONSTITUTION (86TH AMENDMENT ACT-2002) –**

   - Provides Right to Education until the age of fourteen and early childhood care until the age of six.
   - One of the most important amendments, the government directed private schools to take 25% of their class strength from economically weaker or disadvantaged groups of society through a random selection process with the help of the government funding.
   - This initiative was taken to try and provide elementary education to all. Moreover, the local and state governments were made to ensure its proper implementation.
   - In order to make the right to free and compulsory education a fundamental right, the Act inserts a new Article, namely Article 21A, which confers the right to free and compulsory education on all children aged between 6 and 14 years.
   - The Law amends the Constitution in Part-III, Part -IV, and Part-IV(A).

2. **THE CONSTITUTION (101ST AMENDMENT ACT-2016) –**

   - Goods and Services Tax (GST) commenced on 8 September 2016 with the enactment and subsequent notices of the 101st Constitution Amendment Act, 2016.
   - The constitution incorporated ARTICLE 246-A, 269-A, 279-A. The amendment allowed amendments to the constitution's 7th cycle.

- Union List entry 84 earlier contained duties related to cigarettes, alcoholic liquors, marijuana, Indian hemp, medicines and drugs, medicinal and bathroom arrangements. Petroleum oil, high-speed gasoline, engine spirit (petrol), natural gas, and air turbine power, cigarettes, and cigarettes goods should be listed following the amendment.
- Entry 92 has been removed (newspapers and ads published therein), they are now under GST. Entry 92-C (Service Tax) is now deleted from the list of unions.
- Entry 52 (entry tax for in-state sale) has now been removed from the State register.
- Entry 54, Taxes on the export or purchasing of products other than newspapers, according to the provisions of Entry 92-A of the List I have now been supplemented by Taxes on the selling of petroleum oil, high-speed gasoline, motor spirit (petroleum), natural gas, aviation turbine fuel and alcoholic spirit for human consumption, but not including the sale or distribution in the form of inter-State commerce or commerce Reference 55 (Taxes on Advertising) was omitted.
- Entry 62 (Luxury taxes, including taxes on entertainment, entertainment, betting and gambling) has now been replaced by these taxes only to be levied by local authorities.

Conclusion

Article 368 is vague on whether or not the parliament has the right to change the basic structure, but this still does not mean this Article 368 imposes the restriction on the modification of the basic structure and Part III of the Constitution. Although having provisions to amend the constitution was progressive to the fathers of our nation, it is important that such provisions are not misused. Misuse could lead to undue legislative or executive authority that could rip apart the fabric of our society. Indians may not always know all the procedural details of this lengthy and imperfect document, but they know the core — that it's not the whims of political greed that governs them, but the constitutional words. And on Republic Day, this is worth celebrating.

Q8. What are the latest amendments made to the provisions related to citizenship? What are your views on these amendments? Discuss.

Approach

The question demands a thorough explanation of all the amendments made to citizenship act since it was enacted from 1955, also vies need to expressed in a balanced, forward looking and logical manner.

Introduction

Citizenship signifies the relationship between individual and state. Like any other modern state, India has two kinds of people—citizens and aliens. Citizens are full members of the Indian State and owe allegiance to it. They enjoy all civil and political rights. Citizenship is an idea of exclusion as it excludes non-citizens. Citizenship is the status of a person recognized under law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or belonging to a nation. In India, Articles 5 – 11 of the Constitution deals with the concept of citizenship.

Body

Citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution –

- Articles 5 to 11 talk about citizenship for people at the commencement of the Constitution, i.e., on November 26th, 1949. Under this, citizenship is conferred upon those persons who have their domicile in Indian Territory and who was born in Indian Territory, whose either parent was born in Indian territory; Who has ordinarily been a resident of India for not less than 5 years immediately preceding the commencement of the Constitution.
- Citizenship is regulated by the Citizenship Act, 1955. The Act specifies that citizenship may be acquired in India through five methods – by birth in India, by descent, through registration, by naturalisation (extended residence in India), and by incorporation of territory into India.

Amendments:

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 1986 – As per the law amendment, it is no longer adequate to be born in India to be granted Indian citizenship. At the time of birth either one of the parents has to be an Indian citizen for the person to become a citizen of India.
- The Citizenship Amendment Bill, 1992 – The Act provides that a person born after January 26, 1950 but before the commencement of the Act shall be a citizen of India if the father is Indian at the time of birth; after the commencement of the Act, the person shall be Indian if either of the parents is Indian. Also replaces references to "male persons" with "persons".

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 – The Act was passed by the Parliament in December 2003, and received presidential assent in January 2004. It is labelled "Act 6 of 2004". The Act amended The Citizenship Act, 1955 by introducing and defining a notion of "illegal migrant", who could be jailed or deported.
- Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2016 – In 2015 and 2016, the central government issued two notifications exempting certain groups of illegal migrants from provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.These groups are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Paris's and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who arrived in India on or before December 31, 2014.This implies that these groups of illegal migrants will not be deported or imprisoned for being in India without valid documents. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha on July 19, 2016 to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955. It seeks to make illegal migrants belonging to the same six religions and three countries eligible for citizenship.

Views-

Citizenship act has been constantly amended since 1986 because of the very reasons of the issues in some parts of the country like assam since 1971with the formation of Bangladesh as a separate country from erstwhile east Pakistan with the influx of refugees in large numbers in the immediate neighbour states like Assam, west Bengal, Tripura etc but with recent amendment of 2019 there has been protests in large numbers against the provisions like providing citizenship to particular minority groups like Hindus Sikhs Buddhists in India coming from the countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, this with the formation of national register of citizens the fear among minority groups in India particularly among Muslims because they think it is politically directed towards them with serious negative intentions.

Concerns-

-

It contradicts the Assam Accord of 1985, which states that illegal migrants, irrespective of religion, heading in from Bangladesh after March 25, 1971, would be deported. Critics further argue that the extensive exercise of updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will become Null and Void due to this Amendment act.
- There are an estimated 20 million illegal Bangladeshi migrants in Assam and they have inalienably altered the demography of the state, besides putting a severe strain on the state's resources and economy.
- It is argued that it is violative of Article 14 of the Constitution (which guarantees the right to equality and applicable to both the citizens and foreigners) and the principle of secularism enshrined in the preamble of the constitution.
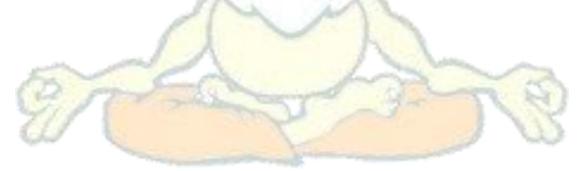
- India has several other refugees that include Tamils from Sri Lanka and Hindu Rohingya from Myanmar. They are not covered under the Act.

Governments stand –

- The government claims that these persecuted migrants will be eligible to apply for citizenship only after intense assessment and recommendation of district authorities and state government.
- The government has also clarified that Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh are Islamic republics where Muslims are in majority hence, they cannot be treated as persecuted minorities.
- The beneficiaries under the Citizenship Amendment Bill can reside in any state of India the burden of these persecuted migrants will be shared by the entire country and not only Assam. Moreover, these migrants were earlier given protection against legal action in the years 2015 & 2016. Long term visa protection was also granted to them. Thus, the proposed amendment will only extend these benefits further to make these persecuted migrants eligible to apply for citizenship.

Conclusion

While addressing the rights of Chakma refugees, the Supreme Court in NHRC vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh case provided equal protection before the law and rights under Article 21 (Right to life) to all immigrants including those who are considered as illegal. With the passage of this legislation, then by means of naturalization, these persecuted immigrants would be entitled to enjoy the benefits of rights guaranteed under the constitution of India, including equality, free of speech and expression, life, vote, work, food, etc. Hence, the law should not limit itself to minorities from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but also include refugees from persecuted minorities of all religions who have made India their home.

Q9. India's test series win against Australia must have taught you some lessons in ethics. Can you discuss a few?

Approach

A straightforward question where you need to bring out the ethical lessons you learnt from the recently concluded India-Australia Test series where India won against all odds.

Introduction

Ethics is very important in all spheres of life and in cricket as well. So much so that in cricket there are worldwide rules to ensure the game is played with a sense of fairness. In fact, Cricket is one of the few sports where the Rules are described as 'Laws' and this signifies how important uniformity and fairness is in cricket. In this regard, the recent Border-Gavaskar trophy gives us many ethical lessons.

Body

To defeat Australian cricket team in their own backyard is a monumental accomplishment. To do so without more than a half-dozen first-choice players, and from the spirit-shattering 36 all out in the first Test, has few parallels. It also brings out many ethical lessons, which have gone into the win of Indian cricket team, some of which are discussed below –

- The fortitude of this Indian team will be spoken about for many years. The world has been witnessing to their indomitable spirit, their unshakeable character. This becomes important when seen in context of the Adelaide debacle (first test), where India used this initial calamity as a springboard to victory.
- Categorical Imperative: A "categorical imperative" to achieve the "far nobler end" of performing our various duties. To inculcate the categorical imperative, one has to become a moral person. On the Indian side, Ravindra Jadeja was seen padded up with a dislocated thumb. Earlier, Jaspreet Bumrah, though not completely fit, bowled with full heart. These actions reflected their commitment to 'duty', and thus on their moral personality. As Kant says, performing one's duty with 'good will' is the supreme morality.
- Some members of the spectators in the Sydney Cricket Ground used racist language against cricketers Mohammed Siraj and Jaspreet Bumrah. It is not only morally repugnant but also goes against the universal values of human rights of respecting the dignity of an individual. But Indian team didn't cow down and played the match even when the umpire suggested that the team may leave the ground if they felt the crowd's behaviour was hostile.
- Even on the field, one of the great Test players of the Australian team, Steve Smith, was caught removing Pant's guard mark, an act that can be considered a moral misconduct. It reflects very poorly on the moral aptitude of Smith. In

face of such attitude, the resolve of Indian team to play good cricket was not lost in fact, it strengthened.

- We also saw some of the Australian players mocking the grave injuries faced by the Indian players. This reflects not only the moral bankruptcy of the individuals, but also the absence of humanism in them. One of the Indicators of Human-hood for Joseph Fletcher is the concern for others, which was clearly absent in some of the Australian players.

- As young people, it is important to remember that our national philosophy, through our Constitution, is "to develop humanism". More than that, it is the Indian philosophy to treat everyone with dignity and have compassion for all. This match showed us how not to be. What not to do to develop a "moral personality". This was reflected from the Australian teams conduct.

- There was the clarity of thought in decision-making, both from the management group and from the captain and the players. These decisions were made with the team's framework in mind, never mind if they weren't always conventional. The final test's strategies debunked the myth that we have been besieged by the T20 generation. Of all the life-lessons, this was significant - desist from being judgmental.

- Further, in the third test at Sydney, with gruelling injuries to key players, India still managed to draw the test match, all thanks to grit and resilience shown by Ravichandran Ashwin and Hanuma Vehari in the last two sessions of the match.

- The test series also showed that instead of fancy qualifications, teams win due to hard work, resilience, team spirit and a will to win can lead to success. It also showed that it is the team that matters. Most importantly, it also brings great leadership lessons: the quality of calmness and ability to give credit to the team. This was aptly displayed by Indian team's captain Ajinkya Rahane.

Conclusion

Cricket is a gentleman's game. It is important to strive to ensure it remains so. The present Indian test team, which won the series down under, ensured that cricket remained a gentleman's game in spite of multiple provocations where highest level of ethical conduct was displayed by the Indian team which helps in the overall striving towards making the game nobler and competitive.

Q10. What do you understand by the 'efficacy' of a vaccine? How is it measured? Explain.

Approach

As the derivative is explain so it necessitates an explanation in which you have to make something clear or easy to understand

Introduction

Efficacy of vaccine is the percentage reduction in a disease in a group of people who received a vaccination in a clinical trial. It differs from vaccine effectiveness, which measures how well a vaccine works when given to people in the community outside of clinical trials.

Scientists can calculate how well a vaccine candidate works by looking at the difference in new cases of the disease between the group receiving a placebo and the group receiving the experimental vaccine. This is called efficacy of vaccine. For example, Pfizer reported an efficacy of 95% for the COVID-19 vaccine. This means a 95% reduction in new cases of the disease in the vaccine group compared with the placebo group.

Body

MEASUREMENT OF EFFICACY OF VACCINE –

- In the clinical development of a vaccine, an efficacy study asks the question, "Does the vaccine work?"
- 'Efficacy' is defined as the percentage by which the rate of the target disease is reduced among those who are vaccinated compared to those who are unvaccinated under ideal and controlled circumstances.8 Hence, efficacy is typically measured in the context of a placebo-controlled randomized clinical trial as the 'per protocol' efficacy (that is, only in individuals who followed the recommended schedule), as the intention is to establish the biologic performance capacity of the product under optimal conditions.
- Relative Risk Reduction (RRR) or Vaccine Efficacy (VE): It is also called 'prevented fraction among the vaccinated' as it measures the proportion of the disease incidence among vaccinated persons which was prevented by vaccination, or equivalently 'preventable fraction among the unvaccinated', as it measures the proportion of the disease incidence among unvaccinated persons which is theoretically preventable by vaccination. Iv RRR=VE=1-RR=1-Iu.
- Vaccine efficacy (VE) has been alternatively called rate fraction, etiologic fraction, and an attributable fraction. The expression describes the fraction of cases prevented by the vaccine. VPDI, in contrast to VE, is not a fraction, but an incidence. Mathematically VPDI is equal to Iu ×VE. This latter formulation emphasizes that VPDI encompasses both VE and the background incidence of

the disease syndrome in question.18 Vaccine efficacy can sometimes fail to capture the complete public health impact of vaccines and can be relatively low when preventable disease burden is high. In this regard, measures beyond efficacy (like VPDI) may be more appropriate and could have a role for both vaccine licensure and policy recommendations.

Conclusion

Very few vaccines are 100% effective. But many routine vaccines have very high levels of effectiveness. While vaccine effectiveness can inform scientists how much it can reduce new cases in those who have the vaccine, scientists can also use this to work out how many people need to have the vaccine to reach herd immunity. The advantages of a vaccine efficacy have control for all biases that would be found with randomization, as well as prospective, active monitoring for disease attack rates, and careful tracking of vaccination status for a study population there is normally a subset as well, laboratory confirmation of the infectious outcome of interest and a sampling of vaccine immunogenicity. The major disadvantages of vaccine efficacy trials are the complexity and expense of performing them, especially for relatively uncommon infectious outcomes of diseases for which the sample size required is driven up to achieve clinically useful statistical power.

Q11. What according to you should be the key priorities of this year's budget? Discuss.

Approach

The question demands a thorough explanation of the priorities of the Indian economy which must be reflected in this year coming budget, also priorities need to be mentioned in a detailed manner with their impact on the economy as a whole. Brief mentioning of budget cycle is also important.

Introduction

India has emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the world and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers in the world over next 10-15 years with the backing of its robust democracy and strong partnerships. India's GDP (at constant prices- 2011-12) was estimated at 33 trillion (US$ 453 billion) (-23.5 percent) for the second quarter of 2020-21, against rupees 35.84 trillion (US$ 490 billion) in the second quarter of 2019-20. With this decline in the growth because of double whammy of low supply and demand due to COVID-19 and the previous issues concerning the economy, the budget has to push for some immediate recovery.

Body

Priorities for the upcoming budget –

- Prospects of Higher Fiscal Deficit creates fear that Indian public debt may becoming unsustainable. It is important that alongwith higher government borrowing, strong commitment to debt sustainability by setting up a fiscal council, public debt management agency and a deep and liquid bond market is the need of hour.
- Need for better estimates and transparency: The most important number that determine the entire budget is the expected nominal growth rate which becomes the base for tax projections, when the nominal growth is overestimated as it was in the last year, tax officials are given unrealistic targets and they try to meet these targets through tax demands, raids thus creating fear among the investors. Both direct taxes such as income and corporate taxes and indirect taxes such as GST depend on nominal GDP. Thus, there is a need of realistic assessment of nominal growth rate.
- The system of accounting followed by the government is based on cash paid out which creates a problem such as delayed payment to the private parties which helps the government to show lower expenditure so that its borrowings are contained. There is a need to move from cash-system to accrual-based system of accounting. This may add more transparency and will lend credibility to the numbers of the government which has rather been in questioned in the past.

- With the slowdown in the GDP growth debt dynamics are at the risk of being unsustainable. For sustainability of the debt, the rate of growth of debt must not be faster than the rate of growth of economy. With debt growing at the interest rate, if interest rate is higher than the growth rate of the economy, there is a risk of debt becoming unsustainable. The debt to GDP ratio growing every year is a real risk which needs to be contained.

- Improve Agricultural Infrastructure to Strengthen Competition: Government should massively fund the expansion of the APMC market system, make efforts to remove trade cartels, and provide farmers good roads, logistics of scale and real time information. Empowering State Farmers Commissions: Rather than opting for heavy centralisation, the emphasis should be on empowering farmers through State Farmers Commissions recommended by the National Commission for Farmers, to bring about a speedy government response to issues.

- With schools, colleges and universities being closed from one year, the education sector is one the worst affected by COVID-19. Online education did cover some losses but the digital divide was clearly witnessed in the rural parts of the country. Therefore, the budget should priorities Digital Infrastructure in rural areas, promote MOOC courses, improve the technological back-ends of major institutions and impart digital training to the SSA teachers.

- Apart from capital expenditure, the budget is also expected to increase the grants for creation of capital assets, health expenditure and grants to states under certain schemes

- The focus on high quality spending with a large multiplier effect in terms of demand and job creation and funding for large infrastructural projects is the need of hour.

- With global trade up to its minimum due to disruption in the supply chain mechanism because of the COVID-19 pandemic India has an opportunity to fill the void created by pandemic and trade war between china and USA, by increasing exports and investments as India provides opportunity to be the suitable investment destination because of availability of cheap labour force and maximum ease of doing business.

Conclusion

India is today transitioning from a situation where it opened its doors to liberalisation and globalisation to one where it has to rearm itself to become a competitive manufacturing hub, a self-reliant country that can face war and pandemics, and a comfortable investment destination where the world can relocate to capitalise on its huge and talented manpower and geographic advantages. One cannot look at it as a crude strategy to close down China and replace it with India. It is more of a strategy to make India equally attractive, to make the world believe in the regulatory stability in our country and to revive the nation and truly put it in on the world map.

Q12. What are your views on the ongoing farmers protest over the farm bills? Substantiate your views.

Approach

Candidate is required to give a brief about background of protests, what are the farmer's demands, what is the objective behind. With the analysis of current agrarian crisis and farm reforms views can be put suggesting a way forward in the end.

Introduction

Since 26th November 2020, the borders of Delhi have been witnessing a huge agitation being carried out by farmers, most of them from Punjab and Haryana. The farmers are protesting against 2 Farm Bills that the Rajya Sabha recently passed: (1) the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and (2) the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.

Body

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020: This Bill allows the farmers to sell their produce outside the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) regulated markets. So, the farmers clearly have more choice on who they want to sell.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 – This Bill makes provisions for the setting up of a framework for contract farming. The farmer and an ordained buyer can strike a deal before the production happens. According to PRS India, a "Standing Committee on Agriculture (2018-19)" observed the APMC laws needed reforms as cartelization had begun to crystallise due to a limited number of traders in mandis.

What are objections of farmers?

- There was no consultation undertaken by the central government at the time of promulgating the ordinances, and subsequently while pushing the bills through the Parliament.
- The global experience across agricultural markets demonstrates that corporatisation of agriculture without a concomitant security net in the form of an assured payment guarantee to the farmers results in the exploitation of farmers at the hands of big business. This posses threat to small and marginal farmers who constitutes 86% of total farmers.
- Dismantling of the APMC mandis, which have stood the test of time and have provided farmers the remuneration to keep themselves afloat.

- The farm laws open the field to an alternate set of markets/private yards, where the buyer will have no statutory obligation to pay the minimum support price (MSP).

What can be negotiated?

- According to Harish Damodaran agriculture economist, Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act has to do with providing a regulatory framework for contract cultivation. This specifically concerns agreements entered into by farmers with agri-business firms.
- There is little rationale for objecting to an Act that merely enables contract farming. Such exclusive agreements between companies and farmers are already operational in crops of particular processing grades, for example potatoes, tomatoes.
- contract cultivation is voluntary in nature and largely for crops not amenable to trading in regular APMC or meant for exports. Act formalises contract cultivation through a "national framework" and explicitly prohibits any sponsor firm from acquiring the land of farmers – whether through purchase, lease or mortgage. Hence this provision is reformative in nature.
- When it comes to APMC, Farmers, for their part, would want no restrictions on the movement, stocking and export of their produce. In case of marketing — especially dismantling of the monopoly of APMCs — farmers, especially in Punjab and Haryana, aren't very convinced about the "freedom of choice to sell to anyone and anywhere.
- The reason for this contention is Much of government procurement at minimum support prices (MSP) of paddy, wheat and increasingly pulses, cotton, groundnut and mustard happen in APMC. In a scenario where more and more trading moves out of the APMCs, these regulated market yards will lose revenues.
- Additional demand of making MSP legal right will cause a big burden on fiscal calculations. FCI which is responsible for procurement at MSP is debt ridden with total debt of $5.8 billion which is out of proportion.

Conclusion

Way ahead can only be found if farmers and government compromise to find a middle ground. Elephant in the room is legal right of MSP, which is economically not prudent and should be negotiated hardly. Earlier laws related to agriculture were product of the times when drought and external calamities were regular. New farm laws are in coherence with changing times, for next revolution in agriculture a leap of faith has to be taken with a compromise made by both parties.

Q13. What role should electronic media play in a democracy like India? Are you satisfied with the present status of media in the country?

Introduction

In the words of Benito Mussolini- "Democracy is a kingless regime infested by many kings who are sometimes more exclusive, tyrannical and destructive than one, if he be a tyrant". It is the fear of being exposed by the media before the public that most of the politicians keep themselves under control to some extent". Freedom of speech and expression subject to reasonable restrictions is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The recent years saw a greater interface between the common man and media. It is the media which has become a part of the life of those people of India, who are mostly dependent on it for various wants including information and entertainment. Media keeps the peoples awakened and there is no denying the fact that it has become one of the major instruments of social change

Body

WHAT ROLE SHOULD ELECTRONIC MEDIA PLAY IN A DEMOCRACY LIKE INDIA –

- The media should work as a watchdog of the government and carry every report of the action of administration thereby keeping the people informed about the day-to-day happenings taking place around them.
- The media is considered as fourth pillar of democracy. It should make us aware of various activities like politics, sports, economic social and cultural activities etc. It should act like a mirror which shows the bare truth and sometimes it may be harsh.
- The media should also expose loopholes in the democratic society, which ultimately helps government in filling the vacuums of loopholes and making a system more accountable, responsive and democratic friendly. Thus, the democracy without media is like a vehicle without wheels.
- Media should act as a bridge between the people and the government and also a very powerful tool with the ability to make and break the opinion of the people. It has the capacity to swing perceptions or evoke emotions. This is why it has gained faith of the public.
- The media should help to shape the democratic society by giving emphasis to issues that are at one point in time, would have been considered strictly private such as child birth, child care, domestic violence, and sexual harassment.
- Media in exercise of freedom of expression is essential to communicate the thoughts, views, ideas, philosophy, ideals and activities. Communication keeps society together and cohabitate. For healthy growth of civilization world, the free flow of information and ideas is essential.
- Modern Methods of interpersonal Media communication include seminars dramas, public meeting and workshops etc. these are effective media

methods to address small and medium gatherings, which can be used as grounds for advocating the Human Rights and building public opinion.

- In any democratic country the media plays a vital role in creating moulding and relating public opinion. Over the years the media became so powerful that it soon acquires the status of forth state as it was aptly described by the British politician Edmund Burke.
- Media today touches almost every aspect of our public life. Media should play a very important and crucial role in enlisting and educating the people and aiding public involvement through advocating issues and transferring knowledge, skill and technologies to the people.

SATISFACTION WITH THE PRESENT STATUS OF MEDIA IN THE COUNTRY –

The present status media in the country is not at all satisfactory. The jingoism of a major section of the media is not new, nor is it unique to India. All democracies, at one time or another, get swept up by the rhetoric of revenge and war. People in the United Kingdom know this only too well. But what makes the blood lust of the Indian media especially alarming is the coming together of **three broad trends** that have adversely affected the independence and integrity of the news industry by allowing the government, the ruling party and big business houses a greater than ever role in shaping and determining the agenda of the media.

- The first is the increasing unviability of the existing business model as the move to digital reading habits has further undermined the revenue base for all but the biggest players. This has both increased the dependence of the media industry on advertisers and made them more vulnerable to government pressure of one kind or another.
- The second is the effective use of social media as a disciplining device whenever individual reporters or editors or even media houses stray too far from the officially mandated line.
- The third is the growing resort to legal means – sedition law, the Official Secrets Act, SLAPP suits etc – as well as extra-legal means as a way of penalising individuals and media who refuse to fall in line.

Conclusion

The Media is considered as fourth pillar of democratic society. For better working of democracy free press is must. But it does not mean an unrestrained press. The question here arises how and who to control press. The simple answer is there shall be an uplifting the standards of journalism can only be solution. Every reporter must honourably and wilfully make an effort not to fall in any trap and raise the standard of journalism. India being a democratic country, where the decision of the masses is supreme, mass media is in instrumental in ensuring that the people make informed decisions. Further, it is through the media that the masses are able to voice their opinions. Appreciation of the role of the media in good governance is essential to societal development.

Q14. What is vaccine diplomacy? How is it shaping India's image and stature in the world? Examine.

Approach

Candidate is required to define vaccine diplomacy, give current stature of India in pharmaceutical industry. How India overcame covid-19 challenges and developed vaccine. In the latter half geopolitics of south Asia and vaccine diplomacy of India with new dynamics can be given.

Introduction

India is known as pharmacy of the world. It is the largest producer of generic medicines, accounting for 20 percent of their global production. It meets 62 percent of the global demand for vaccines. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, the country has been at the forefront of supplying medicines and generic drugs to others.

Body

India received requests from more than 100 countries for hydroxychloroquine (once thought to help treat COVID-19) and paracetamol (a painkiller), and sent supplies to Brazil, the United States, and Israel. By May 2020, India was spending $16 million on pharmaceuticals, test kits, and other medical equipment for about 90 countries.

What is vaccine diplomacy? Vaccine diplomacy is the use of vaccines to increase a country's diplomatic relationship and influence of other countries.

- The Covid-19 pandemic has thus far afflicted around 96 million people worldwide. The death toll has crossed 2 million.
- The 1918 'pneumonic' pandemic led to the death of an estimated 50 to 100 million people worldwide. An estimated 17-18 million people died in India. There has, in present times, been a global effort since April 2020, to jointly address the challenges posed by the Covid-19 virus.
- The pandemic is now at a stage where the largest number of cases and casualties are in some of the most advanced countries. The US has suffered the largest number of fatalities in the world, with over 24 million cases and 4 lakh deaths.
- The affluent western world, notably the US and Europeans, are focused almost exclusively on their own problems. There appears to be relatively little interest or intent in helping developing countries
- New Delhi has set itself the target of immunising 300 million of its citizens by July, from both its AstraZeneca and Bharat Biotech Industries.
- While initial exports were scheduled for Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Morocco, commitments have also been made for larger supplies to SAARC neighbours like the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and

Nepal. This is an occasion for India to earn the long-term goodwill of its immediate neighbours.

- One hopes this exercise is carried out imaginatively, for also strengthening our relations with other countries in our extended neighbourhood, across the Indian Ocean.
- Even before multilateral organizations got on board, New Delhi also consistently supported measures to temporarily suspend COVID-19 vaccine intellectual property rights—which would mean it could produce generic versions at lightning speed whenever a vaccine was created—and sponsored a WHO resolution calling for international cooperation to ensure global access to the vaccine.
- While commercial overseas shipments are likely to start around March, India has already sent 3.2 million free doses of the vaccine Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives.
- India's vaccine diplomacy puts it in direct competition with China—which has made no secret that vaccine distribution is wrapped up in its broader geopolitical ambitions.
- It has even explicitly included vaccine distribution in its broader Health Silk Road initiative, which aims to bolster China's international soft power.
- Vaccines are the single most powerful health interventions developed by modern medicine. Universal, equitable, and affordable supply of vaccines for low- and middle-income countries are needed more than ever.

Conclusion

India is guiding vaccine efforts worldwide while developed nations are struggling India can become a leading example of not using vulnerable times to further its own narrow interests but to help global community overcome this crisis. India has no doubt has earn the goodwill of international community but has improved its stature in south Asia.

Q15. Bailing out distressed airlines is a bad economic precedent. Do you agree? Critically comment.

Approach

Since question is asking you to critically comment so it demands forming opinion on main points but in the end, you have to provide a fair judgement.

Introduction

Last year several airlines told the Treasury Department they would take funds from a $25 billion bailout as the industry faces the looming threat of bankruptcy amid global travel limitations due to the coronavirus pandemic. That bailout is sparking an inevitable debate about moral hazard—when a business engages in riskier behaviour because it's protected from the consequences—and the future of the airline industry.

Body

BAILING OUT DISTRESSED AIRLINES IS A BAD ECONOMIC PRECEDENT –

- While the airline industry is always fast to request a bailout, such a bailout is rarely appropriate.
- As far as bailouts go, it is preferable to extend loans to firms than outright grants.
- To give the big carriers tens of billions with no strings is to subsidize capital that was very well-compensated and imposes that cost on our kids and grandkids.
- Nevertheless, before the government considers any sort of bailout for the airlines, airlines should always first go through the bankruptcy process.
- It's investors who are powerful and want to be bailed out. Investors knew when they made their investments that they would have to weather a storm or two.

BAILING OUT DISTRESSED AIRLINES IS NOT A BAD ECONOMIC PRECEDENT –

- The concessions are greater than some airlines were hoping to make, but the industry is struggling and access to cash is crucial as passengers avoid flying and demand refunds on previously booked flights.
- Airlines would still operate in bankruptcy, but the question is: What will they look like after bankruptcy. Plus, the airline industry has a big problem even if it comes out of this pandemic financially unscathed. How will it convince passengers—or even its own employees—that it's safe to fly again?

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly hurting the airline industry. The hardship is the product of both direct government action prohibiting or restricting flights and consumers' unwillingness to fly owing to their fears of being infected by the virus or infecting others. Cancelled and postponed flights mean sharp declines in revenues but not a reduction in fixed costs. Passengers aren't booking many new flights, so there's little revenue coming in. Further, as airlines cancel flights, the costs of refunding tickets that have already been purchased also mount.

However, even if one is sympathetic to the idea of helping industries in times of crisis, the critical question to ask is, are there more effective ways to resolve a company's financial problems than a taxpayer-funded bailout?

Q16. What role do States play in extending the welfare measures of the Union to the intended population? Explain. What are the current challenges on this front? Discuss.

Approach

In the first part of the question, the answer should mention about the role of states in implementing and helping the centre for the welfare of the people. It entails, the effectivity of State Governments in the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes. In the second part, the challenges with respect to these welfare measures need to be mentioned. Finally, the conclusion should hinge upon improving the Centre-State relations to effectively extend the welfare measures of the Union.

Introduction

The Indian Constitution provides a strict demarcation between the legislative competences of the Union and the States. Yet, the Union, which also has far greater control over the nation's finances than the States, plays a leading role in determining welfare priorities for the nation through schemes and budgetary allocations (Article 246). In order to provide a uniform framework for the holistic development of the country as a whole, the Union Government does provide budgetary allocations and schemes. These schemes- Central Sector Schemes, Centrally Sponsored Schemes aim at the social and economic welfare of the Indian republic, but need effective coordination of the Indian states being a part of the quasi-federal set-up.

Body

For the first fifty years of the Indian republic, social and economic welfare was primarily administered through ad hoc measures known as schemes. In the early 2000s, there was a shift to "rights-based welfare." The Government of India codified several important aspects of social welfare into statutes. These included Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTEA) and the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). This was welcomed by the academic community, who described it as a "new social contract" between Indians and the State.

Role of States – In the present federal set-up of India, the seventh schedule of the Constitution provides a tight-model of distinction of powers between Centre and States. However, ultimately it is the states which work at the grassroot level for the development of their respective states. The fourteenth Finance Commission substantially enhanced the share of the States in the Central divisible pool from 32% to 42%. which was untied and can be spent by the States as desired. However, doing so it delinked many schemes which were previously centrally funded, thus sharing the burden of the welfare between Centre and States.

- In case of Centre Sector Schemes like Bharatnet, PMSAMPADA even though the Central government is primarily responsible for funding and implementation. The collaboration and concurrence of the state governments is equally needed for the effective implementation. As such, states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh are way ahead in providing internet facilities in the rural areas as compared to Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha.
- In the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, states have even a greater role to play to ensure that the particular scheme is effective in carrying out its desired objectives. For instance, case of MGNREGA where the devolution is 60:40 between Centre and States, the role of state governments is paramount for the effectivity of the scheme. States like Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Kerala have had nearly 90% efficiency when it comes to enhance the output, while Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have just been 60% effective.
- Schemes like Public Distribution System, Mid-Day Meal Scheme have directly been under the State Government Implementation and therefore the comparative performance of the states, depend on the manpower, effective funding and the resources the state government attempt to spend on these schemes.
- National Health Rural Mission under NHM provides for development of the quality health-care at the primary health-centers in villages which is directly overseen by the State Governments. Therefore, State Governments are critically important in ensuring that there is effective disposal of the centrally mandated welfare for the intended population.

Challenges at the Front – The Union Government plays a prominent role in determining State level development priorities through CSS. These are grants made by the Union for a specific purpose, i.e., the scheme guidelines, to be implemented by the States. However, there are certain challenges –

- Article 282 of the Constitution confines the Union's power to making grants on the state subject, implying that the implementation should be left entirely to the states. However, with Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the states are left with little discretion with respect to how these are to be implemented.
- With the central schemes on the anvil, the state governments actually depend on the Central Government funds. Recently, the delaying of the funds in schemes like MGNREGA, PDS have witnessed the tussle between Centre-State relations.
- Parliament has limited powers and wide discretion under Article 282, meaning that it is not bound to make consistent, predictable grants to States year after year. That is problematic with states being highly dependent on the Centre for these welfare schemes.
- Even at the Third-Tier government, the Centre Government has again at the loggerheads when it comes to Finance Devolution and implementation. Even these grassroot level governments are indirectly dependent on the Central Government which again creates problems for the effective implementation.

- The scope of economic and social rights in India is properly within the domain of the legislature, and the States ought to play a pivotal role on matters within their competence. By making Union grants variable and highly discretionary, States are unable to plan for consistent and predictable welfare measures — such as those provided by statute — year after year.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Union should still play an important role in determining national priorities for development. One way to do so is to encourage the creation of clear entitlements through statute wherever possible, as in the case of MGNREGA and NFSA. Another possibility is to provide a greater share of Union assistance through block grants and to allow States a greater role in designing welfare measures implemented at the State. In any event, there is an urgent need for greater cooperation between the Union and the States of India to create a strong, rights-based welfare system for its citizens.

Q17. China's duality of cooperation and competition is a tough diplomatic challenge for India. Do you agree? Share your views.

Approach

Candidate is required to understand the dynamics of India- china relationship. While presenting an overview of recent events, student can outline historical phases in Indo- china relations giving a possible way forward for future engagement.

Introduction

China and India's emergence as global powers is unprecedented in modern history. Sino-Indian bilateral relations are defined by a complex balance of competition and cooperation. Traditionally, China has oriented itself toward North East Asia and the Pacific, while India has focused on the South Asian subcontinent. Their remarkable economic growth and military expansions have led to more frequent and sustained political interactions. This engagement has elements of both rivalry and cooperation.

Body

Year 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China. The rise of Asia is marked by the emergence of the two civilizational states which have dominated the world economic system for over a millennium.

India China relations have evolved historically in broadly five phase –

1. first phase of Accommodation and partnership(1954–58), the leaders of the older generation of the two countries jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the slogan of "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai"
2. In the second phase this honeymoon period came to a close in 1959, when the border dispute came to the fore and the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa, Tibet, to take refuge in India. Thus, the second phase was characterised by the collapse of partnership and the road to war (1959–62).
3. The third phase of post-war peace (1963–87) was characterised by growing distrust between the two nations and the freezing of the diplomatic ties. Communist China came to be seen as an aggressive neighbour that sought to humiliate a democratic, non-aligned India. It took almost three decades for China-India relations to recover.
4. In the fourth phase (1988–97), the two nations tried to reconcile their differences in the backdrop of the end of the cold war and the growing strategic concerns in the global hegemonic system dominated by the USA. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1989, and his meetings with Deng Xiaoping, marked the beginning of a new phase.
5. The last phase is characterised by Triangular Diplomacy, in which the relations between the two nations have been increasingly determined by the

entry of USA into the arena. In this phase, India has been trying to balance its security concerns with the developmental cooperation with China.

Major Issues of Conflict and competition –

- India China border dispute is one of the major issues of conflict between the two neighbours. The border issue is rooted in the disputed status of the Mac Mohan line which defines the border between India and China.
- India China border can be broken down into 3 sectors -the western sector which is a disputed one (Aksai Chin), the central sector which is the undisputed sector and the eastern sector in which the dispute is over the Arunachal Pradesh.
- To resolve the border dispute, in the year 1989 India and China formed a joint working group for confidence-building measures and agree to mutually settle the border.
- In 2003 India and China signed the declaration to appoint a special representative to explore the framework of a boundary settlement from the political perspective.
- In the year 2013 both Indian China signed the border defence cooperation agreement in October to maintain peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control. But the recent Galwan clashes has deteriorated major developments made in the past.

Areas of Cooperation –

- India and China have cooperated on various economic issues like the setting of BRICS. The trade and economic relationship between India and China has seen rapid growth in the last few years.
- Trade volume between the two countries at the beginning of the century, the year 2000, stood at US$ 3 billion. In 2008, bilateral trade reached US$ 51.8 billion in 2018, bilateral trade reached an all-time high of US$ 95.54 billion. But the covid-19 pandemic has severely affected economic cooperation.
- Engagement with china on platforms like Shanghai cooperation organisation, ASEAN, New development bank are examples strategic engagement of India.
- Over the areas of expanding influence in the neighbourhood, India china relations are characterized by competition. Geoeconomically, India has proposed cotton route and Mausam project as an alternative to Chinas One belt road initiative.
- India and china have conducted informal summits such as Wuhan and the Mamallapuram summit which had brought stability and momentum to the relations in the backdrop of Doklam crisis.

What will the future be like?

- China's increasing activities and influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region through the Belt and Road Initiative and beyond, and an unbalanced

economic relationship have ensured that the Sino-Indian relationship remains a fundamentally competitive one.

- India is trying to enhance its military, nuclear, space, and technological capabilities, as well as its infrastructure. Establishing or enhancing partnerships in India's extended neighbourhood, as well as with like-minded major powers — including Australia, France, Japan, Russia, and the United States — that can help balance China.

Conclusion

India remains one of the most important factor for the rise of asia. To contain china and to keep rise of China peaceful, India is the only option. This geopolitics dominates Indo- china relations. The Asian Century and the vision of a stable and peaceful world order can be materialised by Sino Indian cooperation in geopolitical and competition in geostrategic dimensions.

Q18. What are the most typical challenges of urban governance in Indian cities? Discuss. What measures have been taken to address those?

Approach

Since question is asking you to discuss so there has to be a written debate where one has to use skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument, or point out the advantages and disadvantages of a given context.

Introduction

The pace and growth of urbanization in India poses enormous challenges to urban governance. Though planned urbanization is needed for the industry and services sectors and also for rural rejuvenation, the lack of empowerment of cities is constraining their ability to translate the urban development agenda into action.

Body

THE MOST TYPICAL CHALLENGES OF URBAN GOVERNANCE IN INDIAN CITIES ARE –

- A federal framework that has not empowered its third tier despite amending the constitution in 1992 for doing so.
- A missing link in the institutional framework for metropolitan planning and governance.
- Inadequate capacity at the local government level to respond to the challenges of urban planning and management in a rapidly evolving urban scenario is the other crucial challenge faced by Indian cities.
- Though metropolitan planning committees (MPCs) and district planning committees (DPCs) have been formed in some states, even there they have not forged links with city planning authorities. They have also not been effective as regional planning agencies.
- A political system that is heavily biased toward the rural sector.
- The political economy of development in India has remained dominantly concerned with the development of rural areas implicitly assuming that urban areas can take care of themselves.
- Accountability rests with the urban local bodies but it is not backed by either adequate finances or the capacity for planning and management
- State finance commissions did not meet the standards set by the central finance commission. They have not challenged the state level political resistance to devolve and urban local governments have remained hamstrung by the lack of funds and are having to function with unfunded mandates.
- There is evidence of deterioration in almost all of the major financial indicators of empowerment for urban local governments in India from their already very low levels.

- In addition to the lack of financial devolution, there is a lack of financial autonomy both in mobilizing resources and in setting user charges to cover costs.

MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ADDRESS THOSE –

- A reasonable definition of smart cities would be where residents demand good governance and the government, through better administration or high technology, is able to deliver high-quality services in a transparent and accountable manner.
- This would require spelling out the dimensions of institutional reform together with the high-tech infrastructure plans. No smart technology can deliver in the absence of smart governance.
- The funding offered by the Government of India for all of the missions is a very small part of what is needed. The rest is expected to come from the state governments and also from the private sector under public–private partnership projects.
- City governments should be empowered through effective devolution and capacity building and state governments provide an enabling environment; cities will be in a position to translate the ambitious urban development agenda into action.

Conclusion

India has been among the fastest growing economies in the world for close to 2 decades. Faster growth has obvious implications for the pace and nature of urbanization. The combination of rising aspirations and growing middle classes on the one hand and inadequate planning for the inevitable increase in urbanization on the other is creating a situation that is socially, financially, and environmentally unsustainable. The challenge facing India's planners and policymakers is how to radically improve the quality of life in cities so that they can continue to accommodate future growth while ensuring better living conditions for their residents and synergetic development of the rural sector. The reform in the institutions of urban governance is crucial in addressing this challenge.

Q19. What are your expectations with today's budget? Please outline five areas where you would like to see some intervention.

Approach

Candidate is required to understand the importance of this year's budget. A broad theme of expectations can be outlined in first part of body and then major five areas can be stated, that should be priority of government for spending. Answer can be concluded with similar historic budgets of the past with a way forward.

Introduction

Budget of 2021 is historic is several sense. We have witnessed once in a century slowdown and an urgent economic intervention with a lightning reforms is expected to revive economy. GDP fell sharply when lockdowns restricted activities, and has bounced back once lockdowns were lifted, particularly as the infection-fatality rate of coronavirus in India has turned out to be much lower than feared earlier. Hence a budget for already thriving economy is expected.

Body

1. Providing impetus to investment and spending
- The pandemic has adversely hit the savings and consumption in the economy. To boost consumption the government may consider a one-time tax deduction for all individual taxpayers in respect of expenditure incurred by them on travel & stay in India, purchase of electronics, white goods, and vehicles, that are manufactured in India. This would help provide impetus to the ailing hospitality industry and give boost to make in India.

2. Healthcare
- After the pandemic-hit year, India's healthcare sector is looking for holistic reforms like reduction in taxes on healthcare and treatment besides higher budgetary allocation. Better allocation for pharma research is also on the cards.

3. Defence
- The government's defence spending got a boost last year in the wake of the conflict with China at the Ladakh border. The government is likely to announce higher budget allocation for the defence sector, with focus on indigenous procurement and R&D.

4. Increase in government spending
- This Budget is also likely to see increase in government spending on infrastructure, both urban and rural. Not only will this help generate employment for people who have lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic, particularly the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, but would help rekindle both rural and urban demand. This is extremely important for India

5. Incentivizing the employment creators (start-ups)

- Indian Start-up eco-system, though still developing, has been instrumental in creating 21 unicorns valued at USD 73.2 billion and it is expected that more than 50 start-ups might join the unicorn club as early as 2022. They are going to be an important part of the vision of "local to global".

6. Education Sector

- There has been a paradigm shift in the mode of learning and teaching method and also in the meanwhile of challenging pandemic there has been approval of The National Education Policy (NEP) by the Union Cabinet. technology in Education, guidelines for NEP implementation, Rural education, Primary Education considering health of students along with their ability to pay tuition fees are important factors.

7. Incentives to promote ease of doing business

- Among the chosen 190 countries, India ranked 63rd in Doing Business 2020 from 142nd in 2014 as per the World Bank Report. The Indian government envisions to take the country to the top 50 in the global Ease of Doing Business rankings.

8. Agriculture

- The government may increase its overall agriculture expenditure to pacify farmers protesting against its farm laws. Steps are also expected for expansion of warehousing and storage capacities.

9. Railways

- Privatisation of trains and infrastructure development remain top priorities for the Indian Railways. While budget allocation may see only a marginal rise, measures may be announced for better public-private partnership (PPP) in passenger train operations.

Conclusion

There is no denying that the economy is facing trying times and it may not be easy for the government to provide "please all solutions". However, with the receptiveness shown in hearing out all stakeholders concerns, we can expect that Budget 2021 to be a reformist one that will place the economy firmly on a high growth trajectory.

Q20. What are the factors leading to high numbers of tax litigation in India? What are its implications for the business climate? What measures have been taken recently to reduce tax litigations? Examine.

Approach

Since question is asking you to examine which is to probe deeper into the topic and understand the topic in detail. Here a candidate is expected to investigate and establish the key facts and issues related to the question.

Introduction

The tax dispute resolution mechanism in India is multi-layered and time consuming, affecting the environment for doing business in India. The country has an extensive tax appeals system that goes up to the Supreme Court of India. However, this system is subject to overuse. The income tax department is a major generator of tax appeals filed under the current dispute resolution procedure.

Body

FACTORS LEADING TO HIGH NUMBERS OF TAX LITIGATION IN INDIA –

- Compared with other countries, India's tax litigation numbers, pendency, and resolution times are significantly higher.
- India's income tax department has a very low rate of success in its tax appeals compared with other countries.
- A taxpayer, after receiving an assessment order, can take an appeal through four appellate forums – CIT (Appeals), ITAT, High Courts, and the Supreme Court. The current tax litigation process in India could take 12-14 years (if appeals go up to the Supreme Court) to resolve a tax dispute.
- The lag is mainly because no timelines are mandated for conclusion of proceedings at the appellate forums, significant workload, lack of a fast-track dispute resolution mechanism, etc.
- If an order is passed by the appellate authority [i.e., the CIT(A)] in favour of the taxpayer, the assessing officer has the statutory power to challenge the order passed by the CIT(A) to the ITAT, High Court, and the Supreme Court. This appeal process is the primary reason for long pendency of tax disputes.

IT'S IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BUSINESS CLIMATE –

- Litigation is a pressing concern for all corporates in India and a consequence of tax uncertainty, inconsistent application and law-related ambiguity.
- A number of cases that have emerged in the recent past have drawn media attention globally and alarmed foreign investors.
- While tax disputes related to interpretation and application are inevitable in many jurisdictions, what makes the experience especially frustrating in India

is the incapability of the system to resolve them expeditiously without resorting to a prolonged and expensive litigation process.

- This leads to the global perception that India is a difficult jurisdiction to operate in or to do business with.
- Enforcing contracts and paying taxes are areas where a weak dispute resolution procedure weighs heavily on the business environment in India.

MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN RECENTLY TO REDUCE TAX LITIGATIONS –

- To reduce this burden of tax litigation, Indian tax authorities have taken a number of measures.
- One of these is stipulating monetary thresholds (of tax effect) below which Indian tax authorities will not file appeals and withdraw the ones that have already been filed.
- Appointed additional officers (independent or additional charge) to decide taxpayer appeals.
- To reduce pendency and enable faster disposal of pending cases in Supreme Court, 22 issues totalling about 1,000 pending cases have been identified and a request has been made to the Supreme Court for priority resolution of cases.
- The Central Technical Committee (CTC) has been created at the level of CBDT to resolve contentious legal issues and formulate departmental view/settled view.
- As a long-term measure to reduce litigation at higher judicial fora, a proposal for Alternate Tax Dispute Resolution (ATDR) initiated by a member (A&J) is under deliberation of the finance ministry.
- A national talent pool and regional talent pool of departmental officers is being created to use their specialised knowledge and experience in managing complex judicial cases at ITAT/HC/SC.

Conclusion

A number of initiatives have been taken to reduce pending tax litigation. The additional measure taken by the government in the Budget 2020 is the proposal for a legacy tax dispute resolution scheme for which a legislation has been introduced in the parliament as detailed earlier. Given that most of the tax litigation is generated by tax authorities, it needs to be realised that the income tax department, which is in appeal in these cases has a very low success rate. It is obvious that such a scheme can only succeed if the taxpayer (who would have a ruling in his favour at the lower level) is offered a substantial reduction on the original tax demand itself besides no levy of interest or penalty. The government will need to forgo an appropriate percentage of its "paper" demands in the scheme, so that taxpayers consider it worthwhile to opt for the scheme to gain tax certainty and reduce their litigation costs in terms of both money and time.

Q21. Discuss the underlying principles of the doctrine of separation of powers. What are the current issues related to the doctrine?
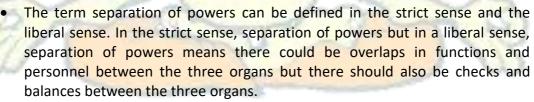
Approach

A straightforward question where you need to discuss the underlying principles of the doctrine of separation of powers in the first part of the answer while in the second part, you need to highlight the current issues related to the doctrine.

Introduction

The doctrine of Separation of Powers deals with the mutual relations among the three organs of the Government namely legislature, executive and judiciary. The origin of this principle goes back to the period of Plato and Aristotle. If this principle is not followed then there will be more chances of misuse of power and corruption.

Body

- The definition of separation of power is given by different authors. But in general, the meaning of separation of power can be categorized into three features:
  1. That the same person should not form more than one of the three departments of the government. Eg: Ministers should not sit in the parliament.
  2. That one department of the government should not interfere with any other department. Eg: The judiciary should be independent of the executive or that Ministers should not be responsible to Parliament.
  3. That one department of the government should not exercise the functions assigned to any other department. Eg: The Ministers should not have legislative powers
- Montesquieu believed that if all three powers were held by the same person, then there would be a dictatorship and arbitrary rule would prevail. Another writer, John Locke mentioned that the three organs of the state must not get into one hand as it may be too great a temptation to human frailty.
- The term separation of powers can be defined in the strict sense and the liberal sense. In the strict sense, separation of powers but in a liberal sense, separation of powers means there could be overlaps in functions and personnel between the three organs but there should also be checks and balances between the three organs.
- The doctrine of separation of powers has no place in strict sense in Indian Constitution, but the functions of different organs of the Government have been sufficiently differentiated, so that one organ of the Government could not usurp the function of another.
- In the case of Indira Gandhi vs Raj Narain, the court held that in our Constitution the doctrine of separation of power has been accepted in a broader sense. Unlike in American and Australia Constitution where a rigid

sense of separation of power applies, this is not applicable in India. But the doctrine of Separation of Powers has been included in our basic structure doctrine as has been ruled and upheld by the Supreme Court in a number of cases.

- In India, not only is there a functional overlapping but there is personnel overlapping also. The Supreme Court has the power to declare void the laws passed by the legislature and the actions taken by the executive if the violate any provision of the Constitution or the law passed by the legislature in case of executive actions.
- Even the power to amend the Constitution by Parliament is subject to the scrutiny of the Court. The Court can declare any amendment void if it changes the basic structure of the **Constitution**. The President of India in whom the Executive Authority of India is vested exercises law-making power in the shape of ordinance making power and also the judicial powers under **Article 103(1)** and **Article 217(3)** to mention only a few.
- The Council of Ministers is selected from the Legislature and is responsible to the Legislature. The Legislature besides exercising law-making powers exercises judicial powers in cases of breach of its privilege, impeachment of the President and the removal of the judges. The Executive may further affect the functioning of the judiciary by making appointments to the office of the Chief Justice and other Judges.

Unlike the US constitution, instead of having strict separation of power India follows the principle of 'checks and balance' which is evident from the various constitutional provisions dealing with executive, legislative and judicial organs. All three of them are strong pillars of India which support and strengthen each other. But as with any system, there are also many issues involved in this aspect, some of which include –

- Since its inception Indian Constitution has undergone various amendments, however, our constitution hadn't undergone major changes as changing the constitution entirely due to its principle of separation of power and checks and balances. But many provisions have also been an undoing for the principle.
- Provision of Emergency powers (Article 352-360) under constitution keep scope for totalitarianism violates principle of separation of power. Use of instrument of President's rule by more than 125 times by union government to remove state governments in different states. It was envisaged as dead letter which proved deadly weapon against states and hampered separation of powers.
- Governor's office: Constitutional and situational discretions are used by office of governor in inappropriate manner. Political activism shown by governor's office in West Bengal and Maharashtra in recent time reduces the stature of constitutional office in Indian polity. It also exemplifies violation of constitutional morality by indulging in jurisdiction of state's powers.

- One nation one policy initiatives erode the federal independence and innovation in their own jurisdiction like taxation, social sector schemes and electoral matters. E.g. push for one nation one election, one nation one tax.
- Sheer number of subjects under state list is much less than union list; still there is constant encroachment by union on the subjects of state list. E.g. Farmers acts of 2020.
- Judicial activism connotes the assertive role played by the judiciary to force the other organs of government to discharge their assigned constitutional functions towards the people. But many times, the courts have gone overboard leading to judicial over-reach and violating the separation of powers doctrine.

Conclusion

Exercising the doctrine of separation power cannot be applied in the strict sense in any contemporary countries like The United States, Nepal, and France etc. But still, this doctrine has relevance nowadays. Our government is an organized system and the doctrine of separation of powers applied in the sense of principle of checks and balances can help in the smooth functioning of any government, as cooperation and coordination among all three wings of the government are necessary.

Q22. What are your views on this year's budget proposals? Is it a progressive budget? Critically comment.

Approach

Students are expected to write about budget and present views on this year's budget proposals and critically comment whether it's a progressive budget.
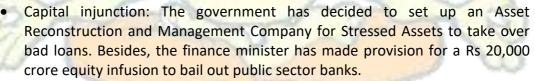
Introduction

According to Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the Union Budget of a year, also referred to as the annual financial statement. Budget 2021, hailed by many as the Economic vaccine, is expected to boost revival of the Indian economy, which is currently in distress due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing national lockdown.

Body

Important budget proposals –

- Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has earmarked Rs 1.97 lakh crore for Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, whose scope has been expanded beyond the electronics segment. To mainly envisions to create an Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Health reforms: The Pradhan Mantri Atma Nirbhar Swasthya Bharat Yojana will support the National Health Mission. With Rs 64,180 crore to build up primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare systems in the next six years.
- Power sector: To break the monopoly of power distribution companies (DISCOMS), the Centre has now given consumers the right to select the DISCOM of their choice to increase competition and to function financially efficient.
- Divestment gets a boost: The government has set targets for strategic disinvestment of Container Corporation of India, Air India BPCL, Pawan Hans and IDBI Bank in the ensuing financial year.
- Capital injunction: The government has decided to set up an Asset Reconstruction and Management Company for Stressed Assets to take over bad loans. Besides, the finance minister has made provision for a Rs 20,000 crore equity infusion to bail out public sector banks.
- Development Financial Institution: A Development Financial Institution (DFI) will be set up with Rs 27,000 crore capital. The funds will be used to finance social and economic infrastructure projects identified under the National Infrastructure Pipeline.

The FM managed to present a progressive budget which will not only help push the economic growth forward but also takes care of the healthcare and welfare of the people such as –

- The government presented the first paperless budget - 2021-22 against the backdrop of a pandemic-induced Global economic slowdown.
- Under the 'Sankalp of Aatmanirbhar Bharat' the Budget focused on six pillars, which include – Health & Well-being, Inclusive Development, Human Capital, Innovation and R&D.
- To shed its pro-corporate image and strengthen PSU banks, decided to set up a Big Bad Bank. The Asset Reconstruction Company will enable banks to improve its lending to productive sectors of the economy.
- It has also clearly conveyed that some banks and an insurance company will be privatised and they further increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the insurance sector. This shows the government's thinking that it is essential to involve the private sector in the long run.
- Post-pandemic budget estimates a deficit of 9.5% for the current fiscal year, from April 2020 to March 2021. This is up from around 7% expected by most analysts before the Budget. The reason for the jump in numbers is because the government has decided to officially admit to the extent of its borrowings and to be transparent in numbers.
- Budget 2021 is also humanist in its approach. To this end, senior citizens aged 75 years and above with only pension and interest income will be exempted from filing their income tax returns.

This budget made a brave-effort to make good use of lesson learnt from the global health crisis and economic set back due to ensuing national lockdown. But needs to be done more to call it purely progressive budget such as –

- A lot more could have been done to address the chronic underinvestment in India's public health infrastructure by appreciably raising expenditure.
- There is no tax relief for the salaried middle class, which will continue to pay 30% to 35% tax plus cess when the corporate sector pays 25%.
- There is no mention and any measures against the stupendous rise in economic inequality during just the last year. While the poor lost their jobs and livelihoods-in 2020, corporate India's profits zoomed.
- However, the household balance sheets have been smashed badly since the pandemic savings rate declining by 5 percentage points of GDP. The key question was how will aggregate demand improve in the next two years if households don't spend this was supposed to be addressed in budget.
- This year also saw the passage of a new National Education Policy (NEP) that called for a doubling of government expenditure over the next 10 years, starting from this year there were expectation from budget to increase the allocation.
- National Family Health Survey which pointed to an alarming trend of worsening nutrition indicators across the country. Nutrition services delivered through anganwadis and mid-day meals in schools were also neglected in the Budget, with zero increase to their allocations.

- The big infrastructure investments announced through roads and railways is welcome, but it appears rural infrastructure was left out of the priority list. Given that rural infrastructure provides both immediate cash relief to workers and fills critical infrastructure gap in remote areas it should have been in priority list.

Conclusion

However, the Budget has given a clear message in favour of reviving the economy, infrastructure and markets. This should be followed up by reducing red-tape, simplifying the tax and regulatory framework, and reforming the financial sector to create a conducive environment for investment.

Q23. What are the key pillars of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'? Discuss.

Approach

Question is straight forward. A short background of atmanirbhar bharat scheme can be given in the introduction, then in the body, main themes can be covered with the way ahead and future of the programme.

Introduction

Prime Minister Modi on 12 May 2020, raised a clarion call to the nation giving a kick start to the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (Self-reliant India campaign) and announced the Special economic and comprehensive package of INR 20 lakh crores - equivalent to 10% of India's GDP – to fight COVID-19 pandemic in India. He further outlined five pillars of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat – Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand.

Body

The five pillars of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' are economy, infrastructure, technology driven system, vibrant demography and demand.

- **Economy –** Contemplates not an Incremental change but a quantum leap so that we can convert the current adversity into an advantage.
- **Infrastructure –** That can be an image of modern India or it can be the identity of India.
- **Systems** – driven by 21st-century technology, and that is not based on old rules.
- **Democracy –** a vibrant democracy that is the source of energy to make India self- reliant.
- **Demand** – where the strength of our demand and supply chain is utilized intelligently.

Significance of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan –

- Talking about turning a crisis into an opportunity, he gave the example that the production of PPE kits and N-95 masks in India has gone up from almost being negligible to 2 lakh each, daily.
- Remaking that self-reliance is the only way out for India, the PM quoted from our scriptures "Eshah Panthah", that is – self-sufficient India.
- Self-reliance will make globalization human-centric. The definition of self-reliance has changed in a globalized world and it is different from being self-centred. India's fundamental thinking and tradition of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" provides a ray of hope to the world. This should be seen in the context of Human-Centric Globalization versus Economy Centralized Globalization.
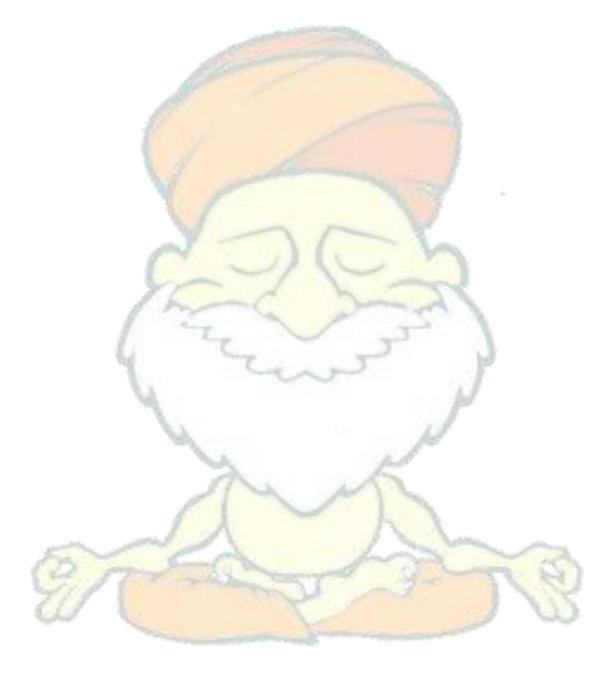
- Self-reliance does not mean cutting India off from the world. India believes in the welfare of the world and India's progress is linked with the world. The world trusts that India has a lot to contribute to the development of the entire humanity.
- The PM also stressed on the need to be vocal for local products and urged people to buy only local products.

Criticism of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan –

- Inflated figures - Several economists pointed out that as per the calculations by many economists, the actual government expenditure in the Atmanirbhar package is just 1%.
- The actions of RBI were included as part of the government's fiscal package whereas government expenditure and RBI's actions cannot be clubbed together.
- Need to spend more - The Indian economy likely to contract and the Gross Value Added across sectors is likely to fall. According to an assessment by Prof N R Bhanumurthy of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), India's GVA will contract by 13% this year under the Base case scenario (The Base case scenario refers to a scenario where governments bring down their expenditure in line with their falling revenues to maintain their fiscal deficit target).
- Credit easing will not work immediately - Direct expenditure by a government such as direct benefit transfer or by construction will mean that money reaches the people. But credit easing by the RBI is not direct government expenditure and banks will be hesitant to lend the money available with them.
- Nothing to stimulate demand – many economists have opined that the government stimulus tries to resolve only supply-side issues. There is nothing to generate demand. This could only be done by putting money in the hands of people.
- Modest MSME package – according to opposition leaders, the MSME package was modest and the measures were skewed in favour of the larger ones. Moreover, the unorganized sector was not catered to.
- Insufficient support for the state governments – the state governments which are at the forefront of fighting the pandemic have not been supported adequately via fund transfers.
- The philosophy of self-reliance - India, like most countries, has been following the principles of globalisation since the LPG reforms in 1991. Even though the globalised world shrank into isolated countries in the COVID19 period, it is yet to be seen if self-reliance can be adopted as a viable economic policy by a country like India, post-COVID.

Conclusion

The strategy of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan seems to give a strong supply-side push by boosting the availability of capital on easy terms and through supporting agriculture and business sectors. But it cannot be denied that there is a desperate need for demand stimulus now. People's purchasing power needs to be increased and demand for industrial products and services must be created to achieve dream of five trillion dollar economy.

Q24. How has the fiscal scenario panned out during COVID-19? What are your views on the mid-year budgetary allocations announced by the government during the previous year? Discuss.

Approach

Since question is asking you to discuss it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion. In simple terms an examiner expects one to discuss various perspectives and present a logical argument.

Introduction

Amidst the economic slowdown triggered by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in India's there have been many demands for the government to announce a large fiscal stimulus to support the economy. Economic growth and tax revenues remain uncertain in 2020-21 making it challenging for the government to finance any addition to the fiscal deficit.

Body

HOW HAS THE FISCAL SCENARIO PANNED OUT DURING COVID-19? India's fiscal support measures can be divided into two broad categories –

  (i) Above-the-line measures which include government spending (about 3.2 percent of gdp, of which about 2.2 percent of gdp is expected to fall in the current fiscal year), foregone or deferred revenues (about 0.3 percent of gdp falling due within the current year) and expedited spending (about 0.3 percent of gdp falling due within the current year); and
  (ii) Below-the-line measures designed to support businesses and shore up credit provision to several sectors (about 5.2 percent of gdp).
  •   In the early stages of the pandemic response, above-the-line expenditure measures focused primarily on social protection and healthcare. These include in-kind (food; cooking gas) and cash transfers to lower-income households (1 percent of gdp); wage support and employment provision to low-wage workers (0.5 percent of gdp); insurance coverage for workers in the healthcare sector; and healthcare infrastructure (0.1 percent of gdp).
  •   The more recent measures that were announced in October and November include additional public investment (higher capital expenditure by the central government and interest-free loans to states, of about 0.2 percent of gdp) and support schemes targeting certain sectors. The latter includes a production linked incentive scheme targeting 13 priority sectors and is expected to cost about 0.8 percent of gdp over 5 years, etc.
  •   Several measures to ease the tax compliance burden across a range of sectors have also been announced, including postponing some tax-filing and

other compliance deadlines, and a reduction in the penalty interest rate for overdue gst filings.

- Measures without an immediate direct bearing on the government's deficit position aim to provide credit support to businesses (1.9 percent of gdp), poor households, especially migrants and farmers (1.6 percent of gdp), distressed electricity distribution companies (0.4 percent of gdp), and targeted support for the agricultural sector (0.7 percent of gdp), as well as some miscellaneous support measures (about 0.3 percent of gdp).
- Key elements of the business-support package are various financial sector measures for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and non-bank financial companies, whereas additional support to farmers will mainly be in the form of providing concessional credit to farmers, as well as a credit facility for street vendors.

VIEWS ON THE MID-YEAR BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR –

- The Finance Minister has announced a package ("Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" package) of policy initiatives targeted at low-income households and micro, small and medium enterprises which are likely to be most vulnerable in the broad-based economic slowdown. The total amount of the package has been announced to be Rs 20 trillion (or roughly 10% of GDP).
- This allocation focussed on land, labour, liquidity and laws, and would deal with such sectors as cottage industries, MSMEs, the working class, middle class and industry. He also talked of focusing on empowering the poor, labourers and migrant workers, both in the organised and unorganised sectors.
- However, a careful analysis reveals that the actual amount of fiscal stimulus offered by the government has been around 2-3% of GDP. As a result, demand for a larger fiscal stimulus has been emerging from various quarters. Several economists have argued that spending on welfare measures should be increased significantly, by 5 percent of GDP or more.
- Increase in government spending beyond the levels already announced would then mean an increase in the fiscal deficit beyond the levels discussed above. This may be financed either if disinvestment revenue turns out to be higher this year due to additional efforts made to sell off Public Sector Enterprises.

Conclusion

The economic impact of COVID-19 has been substantial and broad-based. GDP contracted sharply in 2020Q2 (-23.9 percent year-on-year) due to the unprecedented lockdowns to control the spread of COVID-19. However, if the fiscal deficit is even higher and puts the government's debt trajectory on an unsustainable path, longer term considerations will come into play.

Q25. What are your views on recent budgetary announcement regarding disinvestments and privatisation? Discuss.

Approach

The question is very much straight forward, students need to put forward their views regarding recent budgetary provisions in terms of disinvestment and privatisation, also mention some data regarding disinvestment policies of the previous budgets as well.

Introduction

Privatization is the process of transferring the ownership of a business of a public sector to the private sector. In a broader sense, privatization refers to transfer of any government function to the private sector including governmental functions like revenue collection and law enforcement whereas disinvestment means sale or liquidation of assets by the government, usually Central and state public sector enterprises, projects, or other fixed assets. The government undertakes disinvestment to reduce the fiscal burden on the exchequer, or to raise money for meeting specific needs, such as to bridge the revenue shortfall from other regular sources. Disinvestment allows a larger share of PSU ownership in the open market, which in turn allows for the development of a strong capital market in India.

Body

Historical context of disinvestment and privatisation –

- Central public sector Enterprises policy was reset in 1991 when the government decided to disinvest upto 20% in select public sector undertakings. The first disinvestment commission set up in 1996 recommended strategic sales meant to bring down the government's share to less than 50% in select PSU'S. Strategic sales were part of policies being pursued between 1998-2004.
- In last five financial years attempted disinvestments through buy-backs, exchange traded funds and in some cases transfer of stake to other public sector entities.
- In 2020 a new public sector policy was put in place, accordingly maximum of four public sector companies in strategic sectors will be retained and other firms will eventually be privatised.

Provisions in budget 2021-22 –

- Budget 2021-22 projected 1.75 lakh crore from stake sale in public sector companies and financial institutions including 2 PSU banks and one insurance company. According to new PSE policy barring four strategic areas like Atomic energy, Space and defence, Transport and telecommunications power

petroleum coal and other minerals and banking insurance and financial services, all CPSEs in other sectors will be privatised, in four strategic areas a bare minimum number of firms will be retained and rest will be privatised.

Views –

- The government has no business to be in Business, guided by the basic principle that government should not be in the business to engage itself in producing and manufacturing goods where competitive markets have come of age, examining the realised efficiency gains from privatisation in the Indian context economic survey 2019-20 analysed the before and after performance of 11 CPSEc that had undergone strategic disinvestment during 1999-2004 comparing such CPSEs with their peers in the same industry group showed that on an average they performed better post privatisation in terms of their net worth, net profit and sales growth this indicated that privatised CPSEs could generate more wealth from same resources.
- Providing employment was one of the objectives of the CPSEs in the years that followed several PSUs became white elephants serving neither social nor economic cause, many of them naturally became black holes for public money they were often the text book case of poor management and aggressive trade unionism and became umpireless playfields for political parties with myopic objectives.
- Confronted with an unprecedented fiscal deficit and worried by economy in crisis the government has to find resources and Disinvestment is a preferred option for ideological and practical reasons.
- Privatisation will give ample space for creative and innovative thinking as well as systematic and strategic planning to realize the full potential of economy.
- Privatising PSUs will incentivise the employees to work more efficiently in order to serve the interests of company which will ultimately help in making market more competitive and efficient.

However, the process of disinvestment and privatisation has some issues which are as follows –

- With disinvestment government would get some cash in hand and could carry out some capital formation, but there are multiple claims on government funds and only a fraction of capital receipts from the sale of PSUs is likely to be channelled into new investment.
- At the time of crashing growth and low animal spirits the competition to buy up public enterprises on the block would be anaemic and government will get significantly lower.
- With rising unemployment figures of about 23% due to COVID containment measures it would be hazardous to tamper with PSEs that employ over 15 lakh people at this juncture.

- Privatisation is one element of the overall reform policy but it can't be adopted as a foremost plank of reforms in sectors like banking and insurance simple solutions like privatising all PSUs may be no panacea.

Conclusion

Privatisation only weighs well when there is transparency of process and effectiveness of the regulators, every government has an obligation to reconcile growth with equity and privatising government assets is a step in that direction, however It must be accompanied by competition in the post privatised scenario in order to improve the performance of inefficient units creation of competitive market environment is absolutely essential eventually it is the people who will benefit, as an arm of overall reforms disinvestment and privatisation need to be carefully proceeded.

Q26. What can be the possible implications of the recent regime change in Myanmar for India? Discuss.

Approach

Question requires candidate to understand history of military rule in Myanmar. Answer can be framed giving a short background behind events and how things will play out for India and the region in the future.

Introduction

In the early hours of Monday, Feb 1, 2021 Myanmar army's TV station said power had been handed over to Commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing. Ms Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD) were arrested in a series of raids. A coup was organized by military establishment.

Body

What are the possible implications for India?

- For India, the return to military rule by Myanmar's Tatmadaw (Army) and the arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and the political leadership of the National League of Democracy (NLD), are a repeat of events thirty years ago, but the Modi government's reaction, is likely to be starkly different to India's strong public criticism of the Junta's actions in 1989-90.

- India does care about democracy in Myanmar, but that's a luxury it knows it will not be able to afford for the time being. The only option will be to engage, building on its outreach in recent years via the security and defence establishment

- India has successfully worked with the Tatmadaw, Myanmar's military, to contain ethnic insurgencies in its own North East. The Tatmadaw has, moreover, pushed back against China's influence, increasingly cultivated by Aung San Suu Kyi as she faced a hostile West.

- In 2019, India emerged, for the first time, as the Tatmadaw's leading arms supplier, selling $100 million of equipment compared with China's $47 million.

- In Myanmar Eternal crisis, had the great virtue of providing legitimacy for endless military rule. In 1988, large-scale pro-democracy protests led the Tatmadaw to commit to democratization. There was, however, a significant gap between the promise and its realization.

- The 2008 Constitution, which finally paved the way for the election of Aung's National League for Democracy, gave the Tatmadaw an institutional stake in power. The Constitution reserved for it a quarter of seats in both houses of the Assembly of the Union, the country's parliament, as well as the ministries of defence, home affairs and border affairs.

- The NLD, though, proved more successful than the Generals had bargained for, winning by the elections of 2015 handily. Su Kyi's party cashed in on the rising ride of majoritarian nationalism. Following the genocidal anti-Rohingya violence in 2017, Su Kyi positioned herself as a defender of ethnic-Bamar identity and the Myanmar nation. The result was a head-on challenge to the Army's legitimacy as the sole guardian of the country's unity—yielding a landslide win for the NLD in the 2020 elections.

- Su Kyi also proved successful in containing the fallout from Western sanctions after 2017—expanding the country's economic relationship with China and using Beijing's diplomatic heft to ward off international pressure. This, in turn, irked the Tatmadaw, which believed Beijing had failed to act against insurgent networks operating from China.

- Apart from strategic concerns, India has cultivated several infrastructure and development projects with Myanmar, which it sees as the "gateway to the East" and ASEAN countries. These include the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral highway and the Kaladan Multi-modal transit transport network, as well as a plan for a Special Economic Zone at the Sittwe deep-water port.

- India still hopes to help resolve the issue of Rohingya refugees that fled to Bangladesh, while some still live in India, and will want to continue to engage the Myanmar government on that.

- In the past decade, the balance between engaging Myanmar's civil and military establishment became easier, once Ms. Suu Kyi was released and the NLD was allowed to form the government in 2015.

- In Myanmar, India faces a tightrope walk, A pro-military tilt, moreover, risks alienating democratic forces in Myanmar, pushing them closer to China, and giving that country greater popular legitimacy.

- An escalation in violence will, inexorably, draw the energies of the Tatmadaw away from the borders with India's North-East and will cause more headache for country.

Conclusion

India faces a tough call, as more unstable neighborhood will give rise to insurgency, and for that they will need support of military, on other hand we cannot compromise installation of democracy. Hence the choice for India between democratic ideals, which it has expressed in Nepal and Maldives recently, and 'Realpolitik', to keep its hold in Myanmar and avoid ceding space to China, will be the challenge ahead.

Q27. Is the current breed of actors and cinema professionals an ideal role model for the young generation? Critically comment.

Approach

Question is asking for broader opinion on importance of role models in our life. Question can be approached citing current environment prevailing in our entertainment industry, and can be concluded by giving examples of both positive and negative side.

Introduction

In today's time we all have access to internet and we get news about everything trending on social media. Young minds too learn from trending news about celebrities from all over the world. The celebrities leave an impression on young minds too by how they portray themselves.

Body

India is the most prolific film producer in the world and plays a pivotal source of entertainment. Films and advertisements however, are also instrumental in setting trends for fashion and life style. People in India love to talk about films, film stars, even box office revenue of films. In fact, films are the reflection of modern society and culture on one hand and they easily influence all sections of society in all possible ways on the other.

Are film celebrities an ideal role model for young generation?

- Films and film celebrities are the reflection of modern society and culture on one hand and on the other they easily influence all sections of society in all possible ways.
- In a survey conducted by international journal of Indian culture with young teenagers on impact of celebrities on their life, According to 37% of interviewees, following an actor/actress as role model by teenagers is neither good nor bad, while 30% think that it is bad and 32.5% believe it is good to follow film celebrities.
- There are both the aspects, good as well as bad. Good if teenagers make those celebrities as their role model who are genuinely (or truly) involved in social works for the development of people and society and bad when they follow the negative image of the celebrities.
- Beneficial effects include early readiness for learning, educational enrichment, opportunities to view or participate in discussions of social issues, exposure to the arts through music and performance, and entertainment.
- Harmful effects may result from violent behaviour, exposure to subtle or explicit sexual content, promotion of unrealistic body images, presentation of

poor health habits as desirable practices, and exposure to persuasive advertising targeting youngsters

- Every teenager has their own reason for wanting to take a look into the life of their favourite stars. The truth is that they are obsessed with celebrities.
- Celebrities influence behaviour, attitude, culture, moral values, fashion and lifestyle of teenagers. Children often relate with celebrities more easily then to friends or neighbours.
- In a sense, celebrities are their new gods. They like to fantasise that their life could become like celebrities – they too could be beautiful, desirable, talented and rich.
- Looking at the environment of entertainment industry, celebrities are the influencers for young generation, but the narcotic practices of the industry, irresponsible comments by actors on social media, recent cases of depression and suicides, violence and abuse tell us all that glitters is not gold.
- It may be toxic for young to follow her/his favourite celebrity, because underneath their glittery life lies stress, cut throat competition for fame, attraction seeking behaviour and reel life conceptions of chasing your dream.
- Most of the misogyny and patriarchal behaviour is enforced by the behaviour of protagonist in the film. When it is considered cool to smoke, chew tobacco and drink often as shown in the film, we are on the road of destruction.
- On the other hand there are examples of sheer hard work, professionalism, dedication and will to constantly improve oneself in actor, actresses from industry.
- It is not about good or bad, right or wrong. It is about our choice. Role models can have both positive and negative side. What matters is our choice, where we want to look and from what we want to get inspiration from.

Conclusion

Celebrities are integral part of our entertainment sphere. Young mind must be aware of where to draw the line, when it comes to seek inspiration from real life and reel life. We have educate our young minds so that they become wise enough to make decision about whom to follow, when to follow and most important, why to follow.

Q28. What are the key challenges being faced by India's MSME sector? Analyse. What are the recent steps taken to promote MSMEs in India? Discuss.

Approach

Since question is asking you to discuss, it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion.

Introduction

With a sustained growth rate of over 10 per cent in the past few years, the MSME sector has come to represent the ability of the Indian entrepreneur to innovate and create solutions despite the logistical, social, and resource challenges across the country. Because of its huge contribution to the economy, the MSME sector is called the growth engine of the nation.

Body

THE KEY CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY INDIA'S MSME SECTOR – Despite the rising importance of the MSME sector in the Indian economy, the sector is grappling with several challenges that are hindering it from performing to its optimum. These challenges include –

- The lack of adequate and timely access to finance continues to remain the biggest challenge for MSMES and has constrained their growth.
- Lack of access to working capital. A large number of MSMES often require regular sources of working capital to stay afloat.
- Technology is a big issue for MSMES. Concerted efforts are needed to apprise MSMES of new developments and technologies and how these can be usefully employed by them keeping in view the local conditions, in the language and mode which the locals can understand and assimilate.
- GST has emerged as the biggest compliance issue before the MSMES. Given their small size, they are unable to be a part of the GST network, and, as a result, they are not obliged to maintain a set of financial records. It is time that the GST issues/bottlenecks are addressed and resolved at the earliest.
- Then there are issues related to labour, research, infrastructure and others for MSMES. Some new labour law codes are already in place and some others are in the pipeline. Equally important is to sensitize the state governments/local bodies not to impose undue compliance burden on these units.
- Lack of access to markets access to marketplaces is crucial for the growth of any enterprise. Most MSMES of India in pre-covid-19 times were known to carry out their operations solely through a brick-and-mortar model, which is known to limit the outreach to their geographical location, and also productivity.

- Poor productivity from inefficient processes and unskilled workforce while the MSME sector employs a large section of the non-farm workers, a majority of them hire fewer than five workers, with the World Bank pegging this number to be nearly 94.6 percent of all MSMES.

THE RECENT STEPS TAKEN TO PROMOTE MSMES IN INDIA – The government seems to have taken issues related to MSME on a priority now. Following are the steps –

- Government has introduced collateral-free automatic loans up to INR 3,00,000 Crore. MSMEs can borrow emergency credit from banks and NBFCs up to 20% of their entire outstanding credit.
- In order to address the problem of unfair competition between Indian MSMEs and foreign companies, the government has taken the decision to not allow global tenders in procurements up to INR 200 Crore. The foreign companies who are far ahead in size and strength thus become a threat to our home companies. This will help MSMEs to cope up during this time of crises.
- The finance ministry has given an assurance that the government and the central public sector enterprises will release all pending MSME payments/dues in 45 days.
- In order to address the problem of unfair competition between Indian MSMEs and foreign companies, the government has taken the decision to not allow global tenders in procurements up to INR 200 Crore.
- To help MSMEs government has announced to launch E-commerce portal 'Bharat Craft' that will act as a direct interface between sellers and buyers.
- To boost employment opportunities, the MSME ministry has launched a scheme of 'second financial assistance' to help the PMEGP and Mudra units expand or upgrade.
- Finance Minister revised the definition of MSMEs to a new one so as to address the developing fear of out-growing in size and losing out on the benefits. According to the new definition, there will be no bifurcation.

Conclusion

Amid fears of a slowdown, cut in jobs in various industries and rising unemployment, the MSME sector can play a big role, if aided and supported ably by the government as well as others. Many stakeholders from the private sector are also contributing their efforts for the growth of MSMEs. Key among them is the Global Bharat Movement. This is a unique initiative by SAP in association with NASSCOM Foundation, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Pratham InfoTech Foundation. By helping reassess critical processes, the movement enables these companies to become future-ready. It follows a three-pronged approach – providing access to a global marketplace, digitally skilling the workforce, and digitally transforming the business.

Q29. Infrastructure expansion has significant multiplier effect for the economy. Do you agree? What are the current constraints of infrastructure expansion in India? Discuss.

Approach

Question is straight forward. In the backdrop of economic recession role of infrastructure is important to outline. How infrastructure is responsible for growth can be shown in body with constraints in system. Answer can be concluded with way forward.

Introduction

Infrastructure spending is expected to have a multiplier effect on overall economic growth, primarily based on the Keynesian theory that aggregate demand can be reactivated by increasing public expenditure. Improved infrastructure will enhance the overall productive capacity of the economy and its global competitiveness.

Body

- As India faces its deepest recession since Independence, infrastructure spending can help spur economic activity and the involuntarily unemployed through job creation. The ₹111 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) built on Infrastructure Vision 2025 should provide a timely stimulus to the economy.
- Typically, infrastructure projects are characterised by high capital intensity and long gestation periods, often leading to a funding gap. Public investment is key to filling this gap.
- The government should take stock of the project pipeline and review its expenditure and financing programmes to obtain optimal results and impacts.
- Closing the infrastructure funding gap calls for developing financing solutions and placing more emphasis on collaboration and shared responsibilities across public, private and non-governmental organisations.
- Infrastructure Vision 2025's strategic goals are aligned with those of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to improve the living standards of people.

What are the constraints for infrastructure expansion?

- India's infrastructure gap can be the catalyst for its economic and development leap. In order to bridge this gap, however, an investment of $1.5 trillion over the next ten years is needed.
- **Financing –** Infrastructure projects are highly capital intensive and funding is considered as a major impediment in achieving the infrastructure goals. The infrastructure broadly can be divided into two types, one which is very

essential for the public at large and have no or very little revenue potential and other which has handsome revenue potential. The first kind of infrastructure must be totally government financed whereas the later can be developed on PPP mode. Since resource constraints will continue to limit public investment in infrastructure, PPP-based development needs to be encouraged wherever feasible.

- **Land Acquisition –** Another significant challenge in achieving the infrastructure goal is the way land acquisition is done for infrastructure projects. Compensation fixed in terms of registered value is always the bone of contention. There is always a substantial difference between the compensation offered and the actual value of the land. The land owners always feel aggrieved which results in dispute and litigation.

- **Clearances from numerous agencies –** Most of the infrastructure projects in India suffer from delays in completion. This is mainly due to an inadequate regulatory framework and inefficiency in the approval process. Infrastructure projects require multiple sequential clearances at various levels of government.

- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) –** Environmental safeguards and guidelines have proven to be one of the major reasons for delay in infrastructure projects, especially in the power sector. While new projects need to comply with these regulations, even a project under construction may need to comply with revised standards.

- **Poor pre-construction planning –** Due to the already adverse effect of various impediments like land acquisition, statutory approvals, delayed financial closure, etc. the pre-construction phase of infrastructure projects is pretty long. Therefore, there is delayed commissioning and completion of projects.

What can be the way forward?

- Public-Private Partnership: Government is making efforts towards Public-Private Partnership Projects especially in Infrastructure.
- Viability Gap Funding: Government has made provision to financially support the viability gap to the tune of 20% of the cost of the project in the form of capital grant from its viability gap fund.

Conclusion

Infrastructure is a key driver of the overall development of Indian economy. It is seen that investments in infrastructure equal to 1% of GDP will result in GDP growth of at least 2% as a "multiplier effect" on economic growth across sectors. The recent headway made in developing transport infrastructure will prove to be the biggest enabler for growth. An efficient infrastructure is the biggest enabler for growth. India's growth story should no longer be impeded by a lack of infrastructure, and the fruits of this growth should reach everyone in the remotest part of the country.

Q30. What are India's recent achievements in the field of green energy? Illustrate.

Approach

Since question is asking you to illustrate which means it is asking you to exemplify or to provide examples.

Introduction

Green energy is any energy type that is generated from natural resources, such as sunlight, wind or water. The key with these energy resources is that they don't harm the environment through factors such as releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
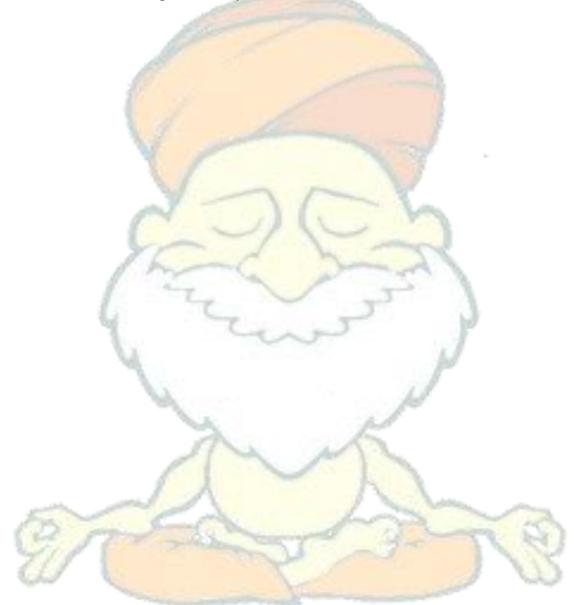
Body

INDIA'S RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF GREEN ENERGY –

- India is rapidly moving towards becoming one of the largest green energy producers in the world.
- As of 31 October 2020, India's total renewable energy installed capacity had reached over 89.63 GW, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- The government said that during the last six years, India has witnessed the fastest rate of growth in renewable energy capacity addition among all large economies, with renewable energy capacity growing by 2.5 times and solar energy expanding by over 13 times.
- Renewable energy now constitutes over 24 per cent of the country's installed power capacity and around 11.62 per cent of the electrical energy generation.
- Also, if large hydro is included, the share of renewable energy in electric installed capacity would be over 36 per cent and over 26 per cent of the electric energy generation.
- Further, around 49.59 GW renewable energy capacity is under installation, and an additional 27.41 GW capacity has been tendered. This makes the total capacity that is already commissioned and in the pipeline about 166.63 GW.
- The government apprised that on top of that, large hydropower, which has also been declared as renewable energy has about 45 GW hydro installed capacity and 13 GW capacity under installation, which brings India's total renewable energy portfolio of installed and in pipeline projects to 221 GW.
  This is significantly higher than the Modi government's target of installing a green energy capacity of 175 GW by 2020.

Conclusion

Meanwhile, Prime Minister has recently invited foreign investors saying that there

are huge renewable energy deployment plans for the next decade, which are likely to generate business prospects of the order of around $20 billion per year. Inviting the global investors, developers, and businesses to join India's renewable energy journey, PM Modi had added that India has a very liberal foreign investment policy for renewables. The foreign investors can either invest on their own or they can collaborate with an Indian company. PM Modi had also announced that after the success of PLI in electronics manufacturing, the government has decided to give similar incentives to high-efficiency solar modules.

Q31. What are the most pressing challenges being faced by the tourism sector in India? Discuss. Examine the recent initiatives taken by the government to address the challenges.

Approach

We need to discuss on diverse challenges faced by tourism sector of India and also mention about government initiatives taken to tackle these challenges.

Introduction

The Tourism and Hospitality industry is one of the largest service industries in India which accounts for 9.2% of India's GDP and employs 8% of India's total workforce. It was also one of the largest Foreign Exchange Earners in India with earnings of $29.962 billion in 2019.

Body

India's tourism sector which has exceptional potential, suffers through following pressing challenges –

- Pandemic setback: A study by CARE Ratings notes a 40 per cent decline in tourism sector revenue in 2020 as compared to 2019. Railways, Airways are working at lower capacity.
- Reduced Budget allocation: Budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Tourism has been slashed to Rs 2026.77 from Rs 2,500 crore in 2020-21.
- Lack of efficient Infrastructure and connectivity: It prevents tourist from visiting tourism potential sites. It includes hotels, connectivity with other cities, health facilities, and transportation etc.
- Safety and Security: Attacks on foreign tourists, especially on the woman tourists have raised this question. India is placed at 114th position in terms of safety.
- Inaccessible tourism: Lack of accessible and affordable infrastructure and services for divyangs, elderly, low income entities, etc.
- Low foreign tourist arrivals: India has 38 monuments listed as world heritage sites, the fifth highest number in the world but attracts less than 1% of global foreign travellers every year.
- Stiff Competition: India is facing stiff competition from other popular destinations like Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam
- Lack of sanitation and cleanliness, high pollution, lack of skilling, geopolitical tension, slowdown in global economies etc. some of the other challenges faced by tourism sector in India.

To address these pressing challenges faced by the tourism industry, the government has taken following initiatives –

- Investment in infrastructure and connectivity: Budget 2021-2022 has allocated ₹1,18,101 crore, the highest ever outlay, for Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and ₹1,10,055 crore have been allocated to the Railways.
- Comprehensive and rapid corona vaccination drive: India is fastest in world to vaccinate 6 million beneficiaries for Covid-10.
- Incredible India campaign
- Prime Minister of India urged people to visit 15 domestic tourist destinations in India by 2022.
- E-Tourist VISA facility: e-Tourist VISA, e-Business VISA & e-Medical VISA (currently, 167 countries have e-tourist visa facility)
- Special Tourism Zones (STZ): 5 STZs in partnership with states to boost tourism in India
- Medical tourism: Economical treatment, quality healthcare infra & highly skilled doctors
- Coastal tourism: Promote intra-regional trade among Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries.
- The Ministry of Tourism developed an initiative called SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) by partnering with the Quality Council of India (QCI)
- Ministry of Tourism launched Dekho Apna Desh webinar to generate awareness tourist destinations
- Development of tourist circuits under Swadesh Darshan for eight Northeast states.
- Development of tourist circuits under PRASHAD scheme.
- Government reduced GST on hotel rooms to increase India's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

Conclusion

Tourism tends to encourage the development of multiple-use infrastructure including hotels, resorts & restaurants, transport infrastructure (aviation, roads, shipping & railways) and healthcare facilities. Thus, concentrated efforts in reviving India's tourism sector lies at the core in achieving V-shape recovery and sustainable development of India.

Q32. Examine the deleterious effects of India's current cropping pattern on the environment. What reforms are needed to incentivise sustainable cropping pattern? Discuss.

Approach

Question is analytical in nature. In first part changes in cropping pattern after green revolution can be given. In second part of the body, after effects of unsustainable farming and reforms to contain this crisis can be provided with a way forward.

Introduction

Cropping pattern in India is determined mainly by rainfall, climate, temperature and soil type. Technology also plays a pivotal role in determining crop pattern. The adoption of High Yield Varieties Seeds along with fertilizers in the mid 1960's in the regions of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh increased wheat production significantly.

Body

- The Green Revolution has transformed India to a food grain surplus country from a deficit one. No other activity has such immense impact on the socio-economic development of the people as the Green Revolution.
- But Intensification of agriculture over the years has led to overall degradation of the fragile agro-ecosystem. High cost of production and diminishing economic returns from agricultural practices are affecting the socio-economic condition of farmers.
- Loss of soil fertility, erosion of soil, soil toxicity, diminishing water resources, pollution of underground water, salinity of underground water, increased incidence of human and livestock diseases and global warming are some of the negative impacts of over adoption of agricultural technologies by the farmers to make the Green Revolution successful.
- Indiscriminate and disproportionate use of chemicals pollutes the soil, air and water and feed and fodders offered to animals. This may be one of the important etiologies of increased productive and reproductive health problems of livestock.
- Various scientific studies and surveys conducted on fertilizer and pesticide residues during last 45 years indicate the presence of residues of fertilizers and pesticides like nitrates, organochlorines, organophosphates, synthetic pyrethroids and carbamates at higher level than permissible limit in milk, dairy products, water, fodder, livestock feeds and other food products.
- Stubble burning in the winter months in northern states contribute to highest level of air pollution in areas around National capital region and has created severe impact on environment and health.

What can be done?

- The exponential population increase in recent decades has increased the practice of agricultural land conversion to meet the demand for food which in turn has increased the effects on the environment. The global population is still increasing and will eventually stabilize, as some critics doubt that food production, due to lower yields from global warming, can support the global population.
- Organic farming is a multifaceted sustainable agriculture set of practices that can have a lower impact on the environment at a small scale. However, in most cases organic farming results in lower yields in terms of production per unit area. widespread adoption of organic agriculture will require additional land to be cleared and water resources extracted to meet the same level of production.
- Conservation tillage is an alternative tillage method for farming which is more sustainable for the soil and surrounding ecosystem. This is done by allowing the residue of the previous harvest's crops to remain in the soil before tilling for the next crop.
- To address issue of stubble burning, both farmers and the government need to explore the Chhattisgarh Model. The Chhattisgarh model is an innovative experiment that has been undertaken by the Chhattisgarh government which involves the setting up of gauthans. A gauthan is a dedicated five-acre plot, held in common by each village, where all the unused stubble or parali is collected through parali daan (people's donations) and is converted into organic fertiliser by mixing with cow dung and a few natural enzymes.
- Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) envisaged in the Union Budget 2019-20 for sustainable agriculture. ZBNF is a set of farming methods, and also a grassroots peasant movement, which has spread to various states in India. It has attained wide success in southern India, especially the southern Indian state of Karnataka.
- Integrated farming system (IFS). The salient features of IFS include – innovation in farming for maximizing production through optimal use of local resources, effective recycling of farm waste for productive purposes, community-led local systems for water conservation, organic farming, and developing a judicious mix of income-generating activities such as dairy, poultry, fishery, goat-rearing, vermicomposting and others.

Conclusion

India from 1960's drought hit country has travelled a long road to become a self-sufficient nation. Techniques used during that time to improve farm produce was necessary to achieve food security. India is now producing more than it needs. We have to invent new methods to overcome unsustainable ways of agriculture that can feed a population of billion and also not harm environment.

Q33. Comment on the recent agreement on disengagement at the Ladakh border. Why should India be more cautious now? Examine.

We need to mention and comment on provisions of agreement on disengagement at the Ladakh border. Further after mentioning positive outcomes, we need to mention reasons to be cautious.

Introduction

After 10 months of an intense standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Defence minister in parliament said both sides had begun the process of disengagement in Pangong Tso area.

Body

Main provisions of recent agreement on disengagement at the Ladakh border –

- India will move its troops back to Finger 3, while China will move back to Finger 8 along the peaks surrounding Pangong Tso Lake in Eastern Ladakh.
- The agreement also entails that any structures that had been built by both sides since April 2020 in both north and south bank area will be removed and the landforms will be restored.
- There is also a moratorium on patrolling in this area until resumption is discussed by both sides through diplomatic and military talks.
- Once complete disengagement is achieved at all friction areas, both sides will undertake de-escalation along the LAC.

Disengagement is a welcome step due to following reasons –

- Triumph of peaceful bilateral dialogue: Even after violent Galwan clash, both sites realized potential of peaceful bilateral dialogue. It took 9 rounds of talks to come up with current disengagement understanding.
- Preventing a costly affair: Heavy troop and equipment deployment in difficult terrain and extreme climatic conditions put heavy cost. Thus current agreement prevents not only economic drain but also saves lives of personnel.
- It provides opportunity to discuss and resolve other standoffs especially Depsang plains. Even long standing sticky issues like demarcating Line of Actual Control (LAC), etc. can be discussed for a long term and sustainable peace**.**

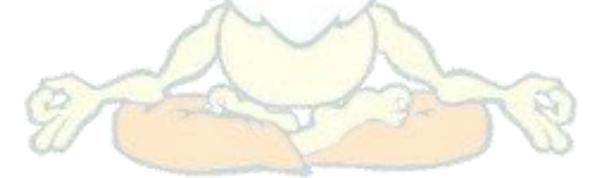**However, India needs to be more cautious now due to following reasons –**

- 1962 experience: in July, 1962, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had welcomed the 'partial' withdrawal of Chinese troops from Ladakh. However,

China invaded Indian territory barely three months later in a blatant act of betrayal.

- Galwan conflict: The Galwan Valley clash that killed 20 Indian soldiers on 15 June, 2020. It had taken place during a verification process after both sides had agreed to disengage from the location. Thus, India needs to maintain cautious approach while current disengagement as per the agreement.
- Other pending standoffs: standoff in Depsang Plains, Hot Springs, Gogra, Charding Ninglung Nallah junction in Demchok sector, etc. are not part of the current disengagement plan. Though not tense currently but they need an amicable resolution to prevent future escalation.
- Restrictive terms of disengagement: As per agreement Indian troops cannot patrol in area between Finger 4 to Finger 8, which Indian troops patrolled before the standoff. Thus, as per current disengagement process nothing stops the Chinese from coming back later.
- Heavy troop deployment: China and India has deployed more than 50000 troops in the standoff region. Understanding on withdrawal of troops is still pending and continues to be a major reason of worry.
- Apprehension of conflict in other areas: Still, there is confusion over the reason for current stand off by Chinese side and also no clarity on why disengagement now, why not earlier or later. Thus, many analyst fear of unknown Chinese activities possibly in Indo-Pacific region, on Sikkim-Arunachal border and on Western border especially in CPEC area.

Conclusion

The 1962 experience lies at the heart of the apprehensions about Chinese intentions, where China used deception and smokescreen to mount a full-frontal attack on India at multiple locations. Thus, India needs to maintain firm resolve and seek 'distrust and trust but verify' approach while dealing with China.

Q34. Examine the concept of 'internationalism'? Why is it important in the current global context?

Approach

We need to define the concept of 'internationalism'. Further we have to mention the importance of 'internationalism' in the current global context.

Introduction

Internationalism is a political principle based on a belief that countries can achieve more advantages by working together and trying to understand each other than by arguing and fighting wars with each other.

Body

- Supporters of internationalism are known as internationalists and generally believe that humans should unite across national, political, cultural, racial, or class boundaries to advance their common interests, or that governments should cooperate because their mutual long-term interests are of greater importance than their short-term disputes.
- Internationalism is an important component of socialist political theory, based on the principle that working-class people of all countries must unite across national boundaries and actively oppose nationalism and war in order to overthrow capitalism
- Most challenges confronting the world and likely to confront it in the future are cross-national in character. They respect no national boundaries and are not amenable to national solutions**.**

Thus, Internationalism is important in the current global context due to following reasons –

- COVID-19 pandemic: Global Covid death toll crossed 2.43 million still, there is virtually no coordination at the international level to tackle covid pandemic. Addressing UNSC, India urged the international community to stop vaccine nationalism and actively encourage internationalism, underlining that hoarding superfluous doses will defeat global efforts to attain collective health security and combat the pandemic.
- Economic Revival: The World Bank (WB) baseline forecast envisions a 5.2% contraction in global GDP in 2020, the deepest global recession in decades due to covid pandemic. Recent protectionist tendencies reflected via USA-China, Indo-China trade conflicts and sanctions on Iran, Russia, etc. deepens economic fractures. Internationalism effort like G-20 summit was born in response to the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 and provided a coordinated response that prevented catastrophic damage to the global

economy. Such similar effort is needed to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic V-shaped recovery.

- Climate Conservation: Sea levels are rising, glaciers are melting and precipitation patterns are changing. Extreme weather events are becoming more intense and frequent. Through comprehensive communication and co-operation we can mitigate ill effects of climate change.
- Global Peace: Tensions between nuclear powered nations like US, China, Russia, North Korea, India, Pakistan, etc. put world in the brink of mass destruction. Terrorism with its complex and wide spread operations threaten the world peace. Wars in West Asia, Gulf, etc. need a global solution through inclusive and peaceful dialogue.
- Global Governance: Institutions such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization which are already marginalised may become increasingly irrelevant. United Nation currently works on an outdated global understanding where only five permanent members of UN Security Council (UNSC) wield power to veto crucial decisions. U.N. as the only truly inclusive global platform enjoying international legitimacy despite its failing's needs reforms to make it more democratic and in line with current global realities.
- Appreciation to global cultural diversity: Fear of loss of identity due to overriding influence of western culture and influence of other cultures on western culture has caused hate and conflicts. Islam phobia, White Supremacy, etc. highlight divides among the global community. Thus an environment of global solidarity and tolerance can be achieved through internationalism.
- Technological advances and privacy concerns: Artificial Intelligence, Crypto-currency, big data etc. have caused concerns related to data sovereignty and privacy. Solarwind hack, Zhenhua Data leak, etc. highlight misuse of technology. Thus, a global consensus based agreement is need to safeguard sovereignty on nations and privacy of citizens.

Following are recent initiatives that highlight adherence to the principle of internationalism –

- Indian initiative in convening leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation nations for a regional collaborative effort on COVID-19 and providing Covid-19 vaccine to global community. India has shipped Made in India' Covid-19 vaccines to around 25 nations.
- COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and WHO. Its aim is to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world.
- Paris Climate deal including intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) and efforts to finalise framework for its working and implementation show a cooperative resolve to tackle climate change.

Conclusion

At the recent The Economic Times Global Business Summit, Indian Prime Minister claimed that the world today is "inter-connected, inter-related and also interdependent" but it has not been able to come on a single platform or frame a Global Agenda, a global goal of how to overcome world poverty, how to end terrorism, how to handle Climate Change issues. Thus internationalism can make us capable to face these challenges together and make us all victorious in near common future

Q35. What are your views on the frequent disruption of parliamentary proceedings? Shouldn't there be a strict law to curb such disruptions? Critically comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write views on disruptions of parliamentary proceedings and comment on whether there is requirement of law to curb such disruption.

Introduction

Parliament is the highest law making body in the country. In addition to its legislative function, it keeps a check on the functioning of the government and passes the country's budget. As a representative institution, it also highlights important issues being faced by the people. These responsibilities have been entrusted to both Houses of Parliament by the Constitution. The fulfilment of this mandate is dependent upon the effective participation of Members of Parliament (MPs) in its proceedings.

Body

As the very essence of our parliamentary democracy is a free and fearless discussion, anything said by them expressing their views and thoughts are exempted as per Article 105 of parliamentary privileges from any liability and cannot be tried in the court of law. But these causes disruption and obstacles to legislative process. Frequent disruptions of parliamentary proceedings –

- In the last decade, MPs have raised slogans, snatched papers from ministers and used pepper spray in the House. During this session, both houses witnessed coordinated sloganeering and display of placards. MPs threw paper planes and a protesting MP, dressed in costume as a former chief minister, and played music to disrupt the house.
- In most cases, disorders in the House arise out of a sense of frustration felt by members due to lack of opportunities to make his point, or clear his chest of grievances of the people that move him or out of the heat of the moment. They are perhaps easier to deal with. What is more difficult to tackle is planned parliamentary offences and deliberate disturbances for publicity or for political motives.
- Disruptions have become an endemic feature of the functioning of the Indian Parliament. This has led to waste of taxpayers' money on a perpetually disrupted and consequently, non-functioning Parliament; second, the legislative paralysis that has stultified governance.
- Accordingly, ruling governments may, in some cases, schedule the transaction of business of each Session in such manner so as pave the way for greater disruptions in Parliament. Such disruptions make it impossible for the Speaker/Chairman to conduct the Question Hour/Zero Hour, and, in some

sense, allow governments to avoid answering questions that are posed to them.

Stricter law to curb disruption –

- New stricter law to check disruption of Parliament proceedings and stop members from frequently entering into the Well of the House and shout slogans, a phenomenon which has kept the transaction of crucial legislative business at bay in many sessions.
- Stricter law with harsh provisions can stifle the freedom of MPs therefore there is need to have a "Code of Conduct" for members of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Assemblies and Councils to minimise disruptions in the House especially relating to suspension for entering and protesting in the well of the House.
- With code of conduct on lines 'Parliamentary Disruption Index' can be used to assess. It can draw a distinction between genuine interruptions which raise issues of national importance and seek to engage members, from different political parties, in a healthy debate, from disruptions, which are made simply to stall the smooth and efficient functioning of the House(s).
- To address this, the parliamentary sessions may be structured on similar lines as in the UK and USA, where the opposition parties get the opportunity to lead discussions. At least one day per week, preferably a Monday so as to reduce incidents of disruptions during the rest of the week, must be allocated towards discussions that are led by the members of the opposition parties.
- The Ethics Committees may also be vested with the power to specifically publish information on disruptions, including names of MPs who disrupt the most, on a periodic basis as well as a record of complaints and enquiries relating to disruptions.
- Thus, the application of the law of defection by convention should only be when a MP votes against the party whip on a no-confidence motion or a finance bill. For ordinary legislative activity as well as non-legislative activity (where whips are issued), a contrary vote should not attract the anti-defection law.
- However, little attention has been paid to what the underlying causes for such disruptions are. More crucially, very little writing has focused on why MPs, envisaged as the embodiments of responsiveness to their constituents, have continued to disrupt Parliament, and been immune to popular criticism.

Conclusion

Parliamentary debates are recorded for posterity. They offer an insight into the thinking of our elected representatives. Disruptions ensured that no such insights are available to future generations. An inscription on top of the gate of the inner lobby of the Lok Sabha reads: "Truth has been said to be the highest duty." When we look at the work done by the Parliament in many disputed sessions, our MPs might have fallen short of their constitutional duty.

Q36. What are the roles and privileges of Lieutenant Governor (LG) in the Union Territories (UTs)? What are the emerging issues with respect to LG's relations with the elected government? Discuss.

Approach

Candidate is required to give role and privileges of lieutenant governor according to constitution and then go on to discuss the emerging dominant trends in their functioning with respect to elected representatives.

Introduction

Article 239 says that every Union Territory in India shall be administered by the President of India, to such extent as he thinks fit, through an administrator to be appointed by him. It is called Lieutenant Governor in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Delhi and Puducherry. Thus, Lieutenant Governor is an administrator and not a constitutional head like governors of states.

Body

Role of Lieutenant Governor –

- Governors are not elected by the people and, so their role was debated in the Constituent Assembly. But, they were considered important in situations of constitutional crisis and for bridging the gap between the centre and the state government.
- Only three Union Territories — Andaman and Nicobar, Delhi and Puducherry have Lt. Governors.
- The functions and powers of a Governor and a Lieutenant Governor are, more or less, the same. The LG, like the Governor, acts a titular head of the Union Territory. But, the powers of an LG are wider than that of a Governor.
- This is because, a Governor of a state has to act solely on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, whereas, the LG does not need the approval of the Council of Ministers on every matter.
- In case of Delhi, the government exercises no power in the domain of land, law, and police. The LG has complete discretion to decide upon any of these matters.
- Both Delhi and Puducherry has an elected legislature and government. But, the functions and powers of the Lieutenant Governors of Delhi and Puducherry are marked by certain differences.
- The LG of Delhi enjoys greater powers than the LG of Puducherry.
- The LG of Delhi is vested with "Executive Functions" that enable him to exercise powers in matters connected to public order, police and land "in consultation with the Chief Minister, if it is so provided under any order issued by the President under Article 239 of the Constitution".

- While the L-G of Delhi is guided by the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, and the Transaction of Business of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Rules, 1993, the L-G of Puducherry is guided by the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963.
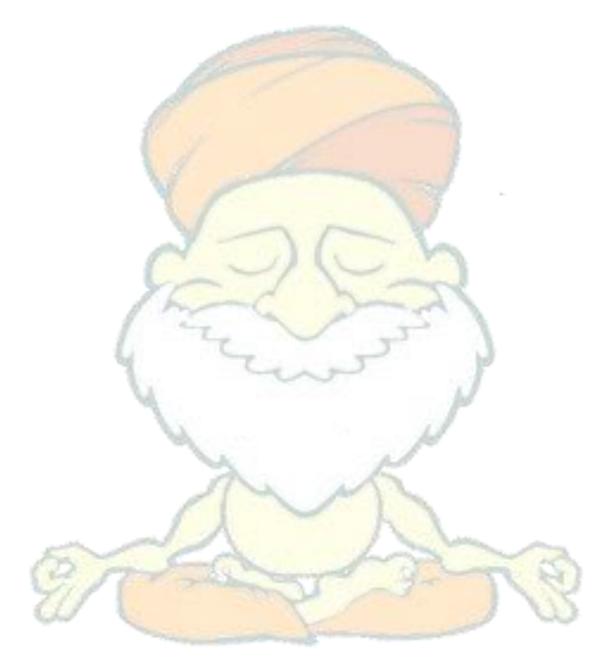
Emerging issues of LG with elected governments –

- Due to the co-existence of Article 239 and 239AA, there is a jurisdictional conflict between the government of NCT and the Union Government and its representative, the Lieutenant Governor.
- According to the Union government, New Delhi being a Union Territory Article 239 empowers the Lieutenant Governor to act independently of his Council of Ministers.
- However, the state government of Delhi held that the Article 239AA of the Constitution bestows special status to Delhi of having its own legislatively elected government.
- SC in 2018 held that for establishing a democratic and representative form of government for NCT of Delhi, Government of Delhi that enjoys the confidence of the people of Delhi should have the functional autonomy to legislate for the NCT of Delhi.
- Hence, through the judgement, the Supreme Court has settled the law in regard to the 'aid and advice' of the Council of Ministers by affirming that the LG is bound to act on the aid and advice except in respect of 'Land', 'Public Order' and the 'Police'.
- Recent disputes also emerged between LG of Puducherry and elected government.
- SC held that LG does not to refer to the President normal administrative matters as that would disturb the concept of Constitutional governance, principles of collaborative federalism and the standards of Constitutional morality.

Way forward –

- Incorporating the Washington DC Model: Indian Government can emulate the model of administrative sharing of power between the Federal Government of US and state of Washington.
- Under that scheme, only the strategic areas and buildings are under the effective control of the federal government and the rest of the areas are under jurisdiction of Washington State.
- Given this, the institution of strategic importance like Parliament, Supreme Court etc. can remain under the jurisdiction of Union Government and areas other than these can be given statehood.

Conclusion

Harmonious Functioning: Constitutional scheme adopted for the NCT of Delhi conceives of the Council of Ministers as the representatives of the people on the one hand and the LG as the nominee of the President on the other. For the sake of adhering to the principle of representative democracy and cooperative federalism, it is required that both the constitutional offices should function in harmony within the Constitutional parameters.

Q37. What are the key considerations that attract foreign investors to a country? Discuss. What are the recent initiatives taken by the government to increase the inflow of foreign investment in the country? Examine.

Approach

First discuss the key considerations that attract foreign investors to a country (to discuss means to use your skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument) then examine the recent initiatives taken by the government to increase the inflow of foreign investment in the country (examine means to inspect something in detail and investigate the implications)

Introduction

Foreign direct investment (FDI) means companies purchase capital and invest in a foreign country. For example, if a US multinational, such as Nike built a factory for making trainers in India; this would count as foreign direct investment.

Body

THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS THAT ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTORS TO A COUNTRY
The main factors that affect foreign direct investment are –

1. **Wage rates:** A major incentive for a multinational to invest abroad is to outsource labour-intensive production to countries with lower wages.
2. **Labour skills:** Some industries require higher skilled labor, for example pharmaceuticals and electronics. Therefore, multinationals will invest in those countries with a combination of low wages, but high labor productivity and skills.
3. **Tax rates:** Large multinationals, such as Apple, Google and Microsoft have sought to invest in countries with lower corporation tax rates.
4. **Transport and infrastructure:** A key factor in the desirability of investment are the transport costs and levels of infrastructure.
5. **Size of economy / potential for growth:** Foreign direct investment is often targeted to selling goods directly to the country involved in attracting the investment. Therefore, the size of the population and scope for economic growth will be important for attracting investment.
6. **Political stability / property rights:** Foreign direct investment has an element of risk. Countries with an uncertain political situation, will be a major disincentive. Also, economic crisis can discourage investment.
7. **Commodities:** One reason for foreign investment is the existence of commodities.
8. **Access to free trade areas:** A significant factor for firms investing in Europe is access to EU Single Market, which is a free trade area but also has very low non-tariff barriers because of harmonization of rules, regulations and free movement of people.

9. **Exchange rate:** A weak exchange rate in the host country can attract more FDI because it will be cheaper for the multinational to purchase assets. However, exchange rate volatility could discourage investment.

THE RECENT INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE THE INFLOW OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE COUNTRY

Measures taken by the Government on the fronts of FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country. The measures include –

- The Central Government amended FDI Policy 2017, to permit 100% FDI under automatic route in coal mining activities in 2019.
- The government clarified that investments in Indian entities engaged in contract manufacturing is also permitted under the 100% automatic route provided it is undertaken through a legitimate contract.
- Further, the government permitted 26% FDI in digital sectors. The sector has particularly high return capabilities in India as favourable demographics, substantial mobile and internet penetration, massive consumption along with technology uptake provides great market opportunity for a foreign investor.
- Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP) is the online single point interface of the Government of India with investors to facilitate FDI. It is administered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Contract manufacturing Production of goods by one firm, under the label or brand of another firm is another initiative taken by government for the same.

Conclusion

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a major driver of economic growth and an important source of non-debt finance for the economic development of India. It has been the endeavour of the Government to put in place an enabling and investor friendly FDI policy. The intent all this while has been to make the FDI policy more investor friendly and remove the policy bottlenecks that have been hindering the investment inflows into the country. The steps taken in this direction during the last six years have borne fruit as is evident from the ever-increasing volumes of FDI inflows being received into the country. Continuing on the path of FDI liberalization and simplification, Government has carried out FDI reforms across various sectors.

Q38. In the past few months, farmers' pressure groups have become highly vocal with respect to their demands. Do you think the presence of pressure groups makes a democracy stronger? Critically comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected to define the pressure groups and then can write how farmers groups pressurise government. As question directs candidates have to critically comment on role pressure groups in strengthening democracy.

Introduction

A pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest. It is called so, as it attempts to bring a change in public policy by exerting pressure on the government. It acts as a liaison between the government and its members.

Body

Farmer's Pressure groups as interest groups/vested groups towards new farm laws –

- Pressure group in the farmers' interests occupies the domain between the state and the marketplace. Prominent farmers organization are All India Kisan Sabha, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Hind Kisan Panchayat, etc.
- Pressure groups trying influence the farms laws and its implementation in the government through methods like morcha, lobbying, correspondence, publicity, propagandising, petitioning, public debating, maintaining contacts with their legislators and many rounds of talk with agriculture minister.
- Their demands relate to procurement prices of agricultural products, fertiliser subsidy, tenancy rights, electricity charges, etc.

Pressure groups are agents of political socialisation they have role in strengthening the democracy –

- Pressure Groups bring the demands and needs of the people to the notice of the decision-makers. The process by which the claims of the people get crystallized and articulated is called interest articulation.
- Pressure groups play a vital role in the legislative process, not only as important structures of interest articulation, but also as active agencies engaged in lobbying with the legislators for securing desired laws or amendments in laws and policies of the government.
- Right from the time of preparation of election manifestos of various political parties to the passing of laws by the legislators, the pressure groups remain associated with the process of rule-making.
- Pressure groups play a leading role in the formulation of public opinion. Each pressure group is continuously engaged in evaluating all such laws, rules,

decisions and policies which have a direct or indirect bearing on the interests it represents.

- For example with the gains made in mass media and education level, various experts and members of these farmers organizations who constantly raise their issues and opinions through media, social media and interviews. Through this, they have tried to influence public opinions.
- It always places the pros and cons not only before its members but also before the general public for eliciting popular support as well as for catching the attention of the government.

Many times instead of serving a useful purpose in the political administrative process, they are reduced to work for narrow selfish interests and hampers the democratic process –

- Instead of the pressure groups exerting influence on political process, they become tools and implements to subserve political interests.
- Pressure groups can allow too much influence over the government from unelected extremist minority groups, which in turn could lead to unpopular consequences.
- Unlike the pressure groups in the developed countries of the West, where these are invariably organised to safeguard economic, social, cultural interests, etc. in India these groups are organised around religious, regional and ethnic issues. Many a time factors of caste and religion eclipse the socioeconomic interests.
- Most pressure groups do not have autonomous existence; they are unstable and lack commitment, their loyalties shift with political situations which threatens general welfare. They many a times resort to unconstitutional means like violence. For example recent Republic Day-Red Fort incidents in Delhi.
- Farmers' organised groups largely influence the administrative process rather than the formulation of policy. This is dangerous as a gap is created between policy formulation and implementation.
- The organisations have limited territorial reach because of a fractured mandate, political party's support, geography and various other factors. For example farm pressure groups in current protest have there most of presence in western Uttarpradesh, Punjab and Haryana.

Conclusion

Active constructive participation of numerous groups in polity helps to reconcile general interest with individual group interests. Democratic politics has to be politics through consultation, through negotiation and some amount of bargaining is also involved. Thus, it is very essential for the government to consult these organised groups at the time of policy formulation and implementation.

Q39. What are the factors leading to high inflation prevailing currently? Discuss. What are its effects on the economy? Examine.

Approach

The students are expected to write the current inflation trends and provide the factors pushing the inflation higher. In the second part of the question, the impact of high inflation should be mentioned. The student should try bringing clarity in these questions with some real life examples to enable the examiner understand the applicability of the respective concept.

Introduction

Inflation is a measure of the rate of rising prices of goods and services in an economy. If inflation is occurring, leading to higher prices for basic necessities such as food, it can have a negative impact on society. CPI inflation excluding food and fuel remained elevated at 5.5% in December, due to inflationary impact of rising crude oil prices and high indirect tax rates on petrol and diesel, and pick-up in inflation of key goods and services, particularly in transport and health categories.

Body

Factors leading to high inflation currently –

- Fuel Hike- With the OPEC countries curtailing their production since pre-Covid times, the subsequent pick-up in the demand has resulted in rise in the crude-oil prices to 60 Dollars/Barrel hence hiking the petrol and diesel prices in the country. With constant growth of taxes on diesel/petrol the hike directly pushes the inflation up. Recent hike of petrol and diesel prices has directly impacted the overall inflationary trend in the country.
- While India's economic activity has remained muted, there has been a consistent acceleration in inflation, since December, 2019. A surge in food prices are the primary reason for the sharp increase in food inflation, which has demonstrated an upward trajectory of 7.87% in June, 9.27% in July, 9.05% in August and finally 10.68% in September before coming down to 6% in January.
- Health safety measures as well as lower capacity may have dampened supply chains to push up food prices. A rise in minimum support price (MSPs) besides aggressive government procurement could also put pressure on food prices. Overall, a confluence of these factors is responsible for jump in food prices even as activity contracts.
- Supply-chain disruption- Amidst the COVID-19 lockdown, the economy round the world took a backseat causing massive supply-chain disruptions which have continued to a certain magnitude till now, hence pushing the price of certain commodities to the higher side even when the lockdown was unlocked.

- The recent farm protests and the global chain disruption have further pushed the inflation to be on the higher side. However, RBI time and again quantitative easing resulted in pulling the food-inflation down, however bottlenecks remain and RBI maintaining the Repo-rate at same 4% in the last MPC meeting.

Effect of Inflation on Economy –

- This first effect of inflation is really just a different way of stating what it is. Inflation is a decrease in the purchasing power of currency due to a rise in prices across the economy. Thus, it erodes the purchasing power of the people.
- The consumers, largely the middle and lower class would bear the brunt of the food and fuel inflation. Higher inflation means lower savings, increasing their monthly budgets. With increase in fuel prices, the automobile sector would bear the largest brunt as the demand for automobiles would decrease.
- Companies engaged in the logistics and transportation of goods are also expected to increase their service rates soon due to the fuel price hike. Demand for increasing product delivery rates has already put consumer-oriented companies in a tough spot.
- Cost of Borrowing increases as such the lenders have a hard time to lend and investments slowdown, which puts brake on the entire growth of the economy. By raising interest rates, central banks can put a damper on these rampaging animal spirits.
- Wistful talk about inflation's benefits is likely to sound strange to those who remember the economic woes of the 1970s. In today's context of low growth, high unemployment (in Europe), and menacing deflation, there are reasons to think a healthy rise in prices—2% or even 3% per year—would do more good than harm. On the other hand, when growth is slow, unemployment is high, and inflation is in the double digits, the economy suffers from stagflation, just what some economist deemed India to be suffering from.
- High inflation is usually associated with a slumping exchange rate, though this is generally a case of the weaker currency leading to inflation, not the other way around. Economies that import significant amounts of goods and services, must pay more for these imports in local-currency terms.

Conclusion

With the restoration of supply-chains, there is optimism that the inflation will be tamed in near future. Push for investment, fiscal consolidation and rationalising the taxes is key. Proactive supply side measures, particularly in enabling a calibrated unwinding of high indirect taxes on petrol and diesel – in a co-ordinated manner by centre and states – are critical to contain further build-up of cost-pressures in the economy. Indian economy is witnessing green-shoots post lockdown, which the government should capitalize on for further strengthening of the economy for an inclusive and faster recovery across sectors.

Q40. The post of the governor is essentially an apolitical one. However in the recent times, the role Governors has come under a lot of scrutiny and criticism. Why? Discuss

Approach

We need to mention instance where governor has worked under political influence and also mention reasons for such politically influenced act of governor.

Introduction

Articles 153 of the Indian Constitution mention that there shall be Governor for each State. The Governor acts as the chief executive head of the state but during the last few years, the governors of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal have played their roles in such a way as to make them highly controversial and politically motivated.

Body

The role of Governors has come under a lot of scrutiny and criticism due to following reasons –

- Selecting the chief minister: Misuse of situational discretion by governor in calling state representatives of political party ruling in Centre to form government. E.g.: Maharashtra governor appointing Chief Minister in early hours of morning.
- Determining the timing for proving legislative majority.
- Time in giving assent to bills or reserving bills for the President.
- Commenting adversely on specific policies of the state government.
- Exercising powers of the governor as the chancellor of state universities: As an outsider to the state, governor is mostly not conversant with local dynamics to handle the affairs of state universities. This has led to governor working on advice of local members of the party ruling at the centre. E.g.: Tussle between the Governor and Chief Minister of Maharashtra over cancellation of University examinations.
- Demanding information about day-to-day administration in a way to block state initiates is claimed to be politically motivated. E.g.: Lt Governor in Delhi, Governor of West Bengal.

Supreme Court in its judgment in the BP Singhal case in 2010, issued a clarification, 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. Despite the criticism, governors continued to behave as political appointees who must obey the master's voice.

Recommendations made by various committees and commissions to make office of governor apolitical and more efficient –

- Fixed tenure in office for governor
- Chief Ministers of concerned states should be consulted before appointing a governor.
- In 1980s the BJP along with the left front government of West Bengal, suggested that the governor appointment should be made from a panel prepared by the state legislature and actual appointing authority should be the Inter-state Council.

Conclusion

Hence, rather than using the governor's office as an instrument for controlling state politics by exploiting his tenure insecurity or party loyalty, it is better for the country in the long run to respect such institution and to let the governor act on his sagacity and sound judgment.

Q41. What are your views on the recently announced plan of privatising 100 public sector undertakings (PSUs)? What will be its economic impact? Discuss.

Approach

Since the question is asking you to discuss so you have to use your skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument, or point out the advantages and disadvantages of a given context.

Introduction

In a clear push for disinvestment and privatization of public sector undertakings (PSUS), the prime minister recently said that it is the government's duty to support enterprises and businesses. But it is not essential that it should own and run enterprises and that the government has "no business" to be in business.

Body

PLAN OF PRIVATISING 100 PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKINGS (PSUS) –

The government's ambitious plan to monetise around 100 government-owned assets as part of the monetisation plan is a good move. Going ahead with the mantra of monetise and modernise, the government will be aiming to achieve Rs 2.5 trillion investment.

- Fiscal support to sick PSUs puts burden on the economy and public sector units should not be run just because of legacy as many PSUs are loss-making and supported by taxpayers' money.
- The government has no business to be in business. When government monetises, that space is filled by private sector of the country.
- The public sector enterprises are loss-making and several of them need the support of public money and that they should not be run because they were started many years ago and were someone's pet project.
- The private sector has delivered very high value in the market and hence qualifies to take over PSUS.

But a question here is whether making a company privately-run is better than keeping it where it is?

- If one looks at the private corporate sector, the performance is not always very good if one moves away from the top 100 companies.
- Most of the non-farm NPAS reside in the private sector and most failures are in the private sector.
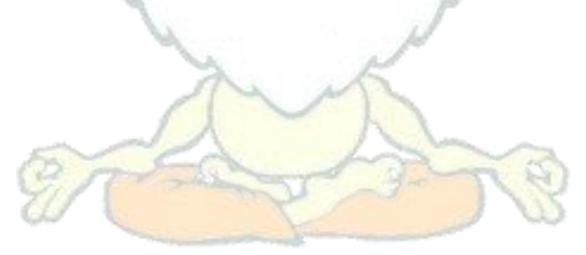- The private sector does not create jobs, which was a mandate of the public sector.

- In the last five years the share of the private corporate sector in gross fixed capital formation had fallen from 26.1% to 23.4%, if IPR is excluded.

ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT –

- By Privatising 100 Public Sector Undertakings (PSUS) The Government Will Be Aiming to Achieve Rs 2.5 Trillion Investment.
- Private sector brings investment and best global practices with them.
- It is believed that the roadmap for asset monetisation including privatisation move given in the Budget will put India back on "high growth trajectory".
- Privatisation will help in achieve an increase in the output of the country by improving quality of the products by reducing unit costs, curbing public spending and raising cash to reduce public debt.
- It will help in keeping the consumer needs uppermost and will help the government in paying their debts, it helps in increasing long-term jobs and promotes competitive efficiency and open market economy.
- Privatization will give ample space for creative and innovative thinking as well as systematic and strategic planning to realize the full potential of economy.

Conclusion

The path towards total privatisation does involve breaking ideological shibboleths that have been built since Independence. A rather curious thought that often comes up in this debate is whether it is necessary for the government to actually sell stake to get the private ethic in the organisation? Can't the same be done by simply changing the rules of governance? This may also be worth considering.

Q42. Comment upon the problem of unemployment in India. What suggestions do you have to create employment opportunities?

Approach

Question is straight forward in its approach students are expected to provide a detailed explanation about unemployment in India and also provide suggestions about how to create employment opportunities, also it is important to mention about how unemployment has increased over a period of time in India.

Introduction

Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. Unemployment is often used as a measure of the health of the economy. The most frequent measure of unemployment is the unemployment rate, which is the number of unemployed people divided by the number of people in the labor force. The unemployment rate in India fell to 7% in September 2020 from the record high of 29% since the country went into lockdown from March 2020, says the report of CMIE – Centre For Monitoring Indian Economy. However, it later increased to 9.1% in December 2020. The lockdown to contain the coronavirus outbreak has forced many industries to shut down thus increasing unemployment across the country.

Body

Causes of Unemployment in India –

- Jobless Economic Growth: India's GDP grown at about 7-8% in last decade, but growth does not translated into creating more employment opportunities for the labour force of the country.
- Joint Family System: It encourages disguised unemployment. In big families having large business establishments, many such persons are found who do not do any work and depend on the joint income of the family. Joint family system is more prevalent in rural areas; hence a high degree of disguised unemployment there.
- Mobility of Labour: Labour mobility is very low in India. Because of their family loyalty, people generally avoid migrating to far-off areas of work. Factors like diversity of language, religion and customs also contribute to low mobility. Lower mobility causes greater unemployment.
- Education: Although literacy rates have risen in the last few decades, there still remains a fundamental flaw in the education system in India. The curriculum is mostly theory-oriented and fails to provide vocational training required to match up with current economic environment. The degree-oriented system fail when it comes to produce human resources skilled enough to specific job profiles in the economy.

- Population growth: Rapid growth of population is the major reason for increasing unemployment in the country. In the last decade (2006-2016), India's population increased by 136 million and unemployment is at a 5 year high in the financial year of 2015-2016.
- Agriculture: Agriculture remains the biggest employer in the country contributing to 51% employment. But the sector contributes a meagre 12-13% to the country's GDP. The problem of disguised unemployment is the biggest contributor behind this deficit. Also the seasonal nature of employment in the sector lead to recurring cycles of unemployment for the rural population.
- Lack of skills: There has been a push towards providing the employment opportunities to the people by government by skilling them. But skill deficit still is a big issue.
- Poor Industrialisation: The industrial sector in India still lag behind. Agriculture still remains as the biggest employer in the country.
- Recent impact of lockdown during Covid-19 pandemic has increased unemployment to the highest levels overall growth contraction led to fall in the industrial output. The lockdown to contain the coronavirus outbreak has forced many industries to shut down thus increasing unemployment across the country. Early estimates of jobs data indicate that the coronavirus effect may have left a devastating impact on the economy, sending urban unemployment rate soaring to 30.9% . Overall unemployment rose to 23.4%.

Impact of unemployment on the economy –

- The problem of unemployment gives rise to the problem of poverty.
- The government suffers extra borrowing burden because unemployment causes a decrease in the production and less consumption of goods and services by the people.
- Unemployed persons can easily be enticed by antisocial elements. This makes them lose faith in the democratic values of the country.
- People unemployed for a long time may indulge in illegal and wrong activities for earning money which increases crime in the country.
- Unemployment affects the economy of the country as the workforce that could have been gainfully employed to generate resources actually gets dependent on the remaining working population, thus escalating socio-economic costs for the state. For instance, a 1 % increase in unemployment reduces the GDP by 2 %.
- It is often seen that unemployed people end up getting addicted to drugs and alcohol or attempts suicide, leading to losses to the human resources of the country.

Suggestions for creating employment opportunities –

- One of the remedies of the unemployment situation in India is rapid industrialisation. Increased number of industries will translate into increased number of employment opportunities.
- The curriculum should be changed with increased focus on learning and skill development. Recent new education policy is a good step in this direction with provisions to encourage creativity and critical thinking among students.
- Self-employment should be encouraged more with introduction of liability free loans and government assistance for funding.
- Incubation centres need to be promoted to cultivate original business ideas that will be financially viable.
- Better irrigation facilities, better farming equipment, dissemination of knowledge regarding multiple crop rotation and crop management should be focused on.
- Government as well as leading business houses of the country should seek to invite more foreign collaboration and capital investment in every sector.
- There are number of labour intensive manufacturing sectors in India such as food processing, leather and footwear, wood manufacturers and furniture, textiles and apparel and garments. Special packages, individually designed for each industry are needed to create jobs.
- Public investment in sectors like health, education, police and judiciary can create many government jobs.

Conclusion

Rapid population growth adds more labour force to the market. More population means more consumption and less saving, less saving implies less capital formation and less production which finally leads to less employment. Thus a collaborative effort is needed by government and industry to nudge an inclusive growth by supporting new sectors. There is a need for National Employment Policy (NEP) that would encompass a set of multidimensional interventions covering a whole range of social and economic issues affecting many policy spheres and not just the areas of labour and employment. The policy would be a critical tool to contribute significantly to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

43. What is the mandate of SEBI? Examine the recent issues pertaining to the functioning and role of SEBI in the regulatory context.

Approach

Question is straight forward in its approach, students are expected to give a brief about SEBI in introduction and the mention about the mandate of the SEBI as demanded by the question then in the second part issues pertaining to the functioning and role of SEBI need to be explained properly and then conclude by arriving at a balanced and forward looking conclusion.

Introduction

SEBI is a statutory body established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992. Before SEBI came into existence, Controller of Capital Issues was the regulatory authority it derived authority from the Capital Issues (Control) Act, 1947. In April, 1988 the SEBI was constituted as the regulator of capital markets in India under a resolution of the Government of India. Initially SEBI was a non-statutory body without any statutory power. It became autonomous and given statutory powers by SEBI Act 1992.
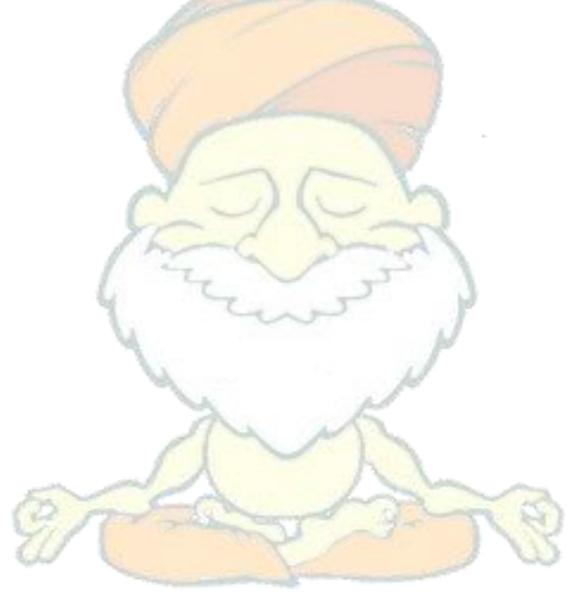
Body

Mandate of SEBI –

- To Inspect Books of Accounts: Accounts of any listed public company or a public company intending to be listed can be inspected by SEBI. However for such inspection there should be reasonable grounds to suggest that the company is indulging in unfair trade practices or is involved in insider trading.
- To regulate securities market intermediaries: SEBI has the power to regulate the intermediaries for proper functioning of the market. In order to do so it can also restrain persons from accessing the securities market and even prohibit any person from such access.
- To investigate: If SEBI has reasonable grounds to suggest that the any particular transaction or transactions are dealt in a manner which is detrimental for the investor, then it can order anyone to investigate such transactions.
- To review the market operations, organizational structure and administrative control of the stock exchanges.
- To overlook the registration and regulation of working of market intermediaries such as merchant bankers, portfolio managers, stock broker etc.
- To overlook the registration and regulation of Mutual Funds, Venture Capital Funds and Collective Investment Schemes.
- Prohibiting fraudulent and unfair trade practices in the securities market. Prohibition of Insider Trading and to educate and train the investors.

Issues pertaining to functioning and role of SEBI –

- SEBI has given intellectual leadership for the transformation of equity market. Initially the objectives of SEBI were not adequately defined and it frequently succumbed to lobbying. SEBI regulations are laws but the process through which regulations are drafted leaves a lot to be desired. Neither regulation making nor post-mortem analysis of regulations is shaped by evidences.

- Enforcement process- The statutory powers of SEBI are at par with a civil court SEBI has made various regulations but only making regulations and giving orders is not enough if it is not able to enforce the same. SEBI need to strengthen its surveillance and enforcement functions.it needs to ensure that violations do not go unnoticed whether small or large.

- Talent pool and market intelligence- In 2012 SEBI had 643 employees whereas US security and exchange commission alone had 1000 people. As we all know human resource is the most important resource for an organisation. SEBI needs to increase its human resource in both quality and quantity. It needs to significantly improve its market intelligence, technology and talent pool in order to improve its performance.

- Deepening capital market- The number of participant in the capital market has not risen much. Still a large section of society does not deal in security market. SEBI has done a lot to encourage people to participate in capital market such as abolishing entry load on mutual funds, simplifying KYC norms but it needs to take some stronger steps to deepen participation in capital market. It should work deeper participation in equity by pension, superannuation and gratuity funds, developing a vibrant retail debt segment and reducing the cost of transaction.

- Corporate debt and securitization market- Despite numerous attempts the debt market volume has increased but it has failed to attract sufficient liquidity. The regulator need to develop a vibrant corporate debt market and securitization market but these largely remain part of over the counter market.

- Matching up to global standard- Capital markets are growing and the size of SEBI as compared to security market is not sufficient to properly regulate the capital market .like its peers (regulators of US and UK) it needs to established self-regulatory organisations. SRO can focus on routine decisions and SEBI can work on more important issues.

- Negatively charged- SEBI's appointment process has always been criticise. Allegation of corruption by SEBI staff are frequently heard. The accountability mechanism that envelope SEBI are quite poor. It is very important to make the recruitment process fair and transparent.

- The performance of Sebi also came under severe criticism in the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) constituted to examine the stock market scam and matters relating thereto in April 2001. The committee indicted Sebi for all-round failure in properly regulating the market.

Conclusion

SEBI has taken a number of steps in the last few years to reform Indian capital market. It has past various regulations such as freedom in designing and pricing instruments, introduction of stock invest scheme, banning badla system and introduction of electronic trading. It also has faced various controversies such as Ulips, Sahara and MCXSX controversies. In such a small time SEBI has earned its respect and place in the capital market however there are various problems and challenges in front of it which it needs to overcome.

44. What is the existing framework for clinical trials of vaccines and medicines in India? Explain.

Approach

Candidates are expected to explain about clinical trials. And write about existing framework in India for clinical trials of vaccines and medicines.

Introduction

The Union Ministry for Health and Family Welfare has notified the Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 with an aim to promote clinical research in the country. The new rules will change the regulatory landscape for the approval of new drugs and conduct of clinical trials in the country.

Body

Clinical trials: Clinical trials are research studies performed in people that are aimed at evaluating a medical, surgical, or behavioural intervention. They are the primary way that researchers find out if a new treatment, like a new drug or diet or medical device is safe and effective in people. Often a clinical trial is used to learn if a new treatment is more effective and/or has less harmful side effects than the standard treatment.

Clinical trials framework in India –

- Clinical trials in India are governed by the acts: Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, Medical Council of India Act, 1956 and Central Council for Indian Medicine Act, 1970. Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, CDSCO is responsible for approval of Drugs, Conduct of Clinical Trials.
- It also lays down the standards for Drugs and has control over the quality of imported Drugs in the country. It is also responsible for coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organisations by providing expert advice with a view of bring about the uniformity in the enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.
- Further CDSCO along with state regulators, is jointly responsible for grant of licenses of certain specialised categories of critical Drugs such as blood and blood products, I. V. Fluids, Vaccine etc.

Prerequisites of conducting a clinical trial in India are –

- Permission from the Drugs Controller General, India (DCGI).
- Approval from respective Ethics Committee where the study is planned.
- Mandatory registration on the ICMR maintained website.

- Online application: The application for conducting a clinical trial is required to be submitted to the DCGI via SUGAM, an online portal managed by the CDSCO.
- DCGI will decide the compensation in cases of death and permanent disability or other injury to a trial participant. Ethics committee will monitor the trials and decide on the amount of compensation in cases of adverse events. The quantum of compensation is required to be calculated on the basis of the formula specified in the New Rules.

Clinical trials are carried out in four phases. Clinical trials of drugs developed in India have to undergo all four phases of trials in India.

- Phase I or clinical pharmacology trials or "first in man" study: This is the first time where the new drug is administered to a small number, a minimum of 2 healthy, informed volunteers for each dose under the close supervision of a doctor. The purpose is to determine whether the new compound is tolerated by the patient's body and behaves in the predicted way.
- Phase II or exploratory trials: During this phase, the medicine is administered to a group of approximately 10-12 informed patients in 3 to 4 centres to determine its effect and also to check for any unacceptable side effects.
- Phase III or confirmatory trials: Purpose is to obtain sufficient evidence about the efficacy and safety of the drug in a larger number of patients, generally in comparison with a standard drug and/or a placebo as appropriate. In this phase, the group is between 1000-3000 subjects. If the results are favourable, the data is presented to the licensing authorities for a commercial license to market the drug for use by the patient population for the specified and approved indication.
- Phase IV trials or post-marketing phase: Phase of surveillance after the medicine is made available to doctors, who start prescribing it. The effects are monitored on thousands of patients to help identify any unforeseen side effects.

Conclusion

Clinical trial framework should provide for a predictable, clear and transparent system for regulation of clinical trials. The changes such as reduced approval period and online registry, are expected to revive and drive the growth of the clinical trials industry in India. Therefore it is important for anyone preparing a trial of a new therapy in humans that the specific aims, problems and risks or benefits of a particular therapy be thoroughly considered and that the chosen options be scientifically sound and ethically justified.

45. What are the recent guidelines issued by the government for regulating the OTT space and social media? Should there be any government control in their functioning? Critically examine.

Approach

Candidate is required to outline the guidelines in the initial body part and then analyse the same in the second half. With some examples and similar judgments answer can be concluded.

Introduction

For the first time, the government, under the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, has brought in detailed guidelines for digital content on both digital media and Over The Top (OTT) platforms, while giving powers to the government to step in.

Body

In a long anticipated move, the government notified guidelines that seek to provide a grievance redressal mechanism for users of digital platforms of all kinds — social media sites, messaging apps, over the top (OTT) streaming services, and digital news publishers.

The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 mandate that social media and messaging platforms will have to adhere to new requirements in assisting investigative agencies of the government.

What are the new rules?

- The broad themes of the guidelines revolve around grievance redressal, compliance with the law, and adherence to the media code.
- Social media platforms like Google or Facebook, or intermediaries, for instance, will now have to appoint a grievance officer to deal with users complaints.
- intermediaries have to appoint a 'Chief Compliance Officer, who will have to ensure that the rules are followed; the officer "shall be liable in any proceedings relating to any relevant third party information, data or communication link made available or hosted by that intermediary.
- The intermediaries will also have to appoint a nodal contact person for "24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies
- The other key requirement is that such a social media intermediary would have to "enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource" as may be required by a judicial order.
- This means, a problematic message, that is considered "an offence related to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, or public order, or of incitement to an offence

relating to the above or in relation with rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material", will have to be traced to its initiator on messaging applications like WhatsApp and Signal.

- For digital publishers of news and current affairs as well as video streaming services, an identical three tier structure for grievance redressal has been mandated.

- This structure will look into grievances in relation to a Code of Ethics, which is listed in the appendix to the rules. Among other things, the Code of Ethics includes the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' as prescribed by the Press Council of India, as also content that shall not be published "content which is prohibited under any law for the time being in force shall not be published or transmitted.

- The guidelines also require streaming services to classify content based on its nature and type. So, for instance, content "for persons aged 16 years and above, and can be viewed by a person under the age of 16.

Context and need of guidelines –

- A 2018 Supreme Court observation and a 2020 Supreme Court order in Sudarshan TV case, in addition to discussion in Rajya Sabha once in 2018 and then through a report laid by a committee in 2020 asked the need for coming up with rules to "empower the ordinary users of digital platforms to seek redressal for their grievances and command accountability in case of infringement of their rights".

- the government said that it wanted to create a level playing field in terms of rules to be followed by online news and media platforms vis-à-vis traditional media outlets.

- Citing instructions from the Supreme Court and the concerns raised in Parliament about social media abuse, the government released guidelines.

- The big push came in the form of the violent incidents at the Red Fort on January 26, compromised our honour on republic day, following which the government and Twitter were embroiled in a spat over the removal of certain accounts from the social media platform.

- Section 79 of the Information Technology Act provides a "safe harbour" to intermediaries that host user-generated content, and exempts them from liability for the actions of users.

- The new guidelines notified on Thursday prescribe an element of due diligence to be followed by the intermediary, failing which the safe harbour provisions would cease to apply.

- The recent campaign of misinformation on media during the CAA protests, farmer's protests, toolkit case, Sudarshan TV case calls for more responsible regulation of these platforms. Social media is used to tarnish image of India is a matter of concern

- Government can regulate some content but it has to be in reasonable limits. Self-regulation by OTT and social media platforms is the best way forward. OTT platforms are providing very explicit porn content with no option of

parental regulation. It is creating more problems of sexual abuse and harassment.

- Social media and OTT platforms are too big to control in terms of the information they generate, this does not mean that regulation cannot be done. A more proactive vigil and accountability from big platforms like Facebook and twitter will pave way for the harmonious balance of oversight.
- In the times of daily abuse, rape threats, hatred and unregulated pornographic content, social engagement has become matter of responsible and careful behaviour. We should not ignore elephant in the room and tame the giant before it goes out of control.

Conclusion

Social media and OTT platforms have become products of daily consumption in our life. It is necessary to take action before they become toxic and instruments of hate and polarisation. While regulation should not hinder the flow of information, we have to make sure that harmonious balance of optimum regulation is achieved.

46. What are the key areas that require immediate reforms to improve the efficacy of agricultural marketing in India? Discuss.

Approach

A straightforward question where in you need to discuss the key areas that require immediate reforms to improve the efficacy of agricultural marketing in India.

Introduction

Agriculture is a primary activity in India and is the largest source of employment in India, where food accounts for about half of consumer expenditures. Moving agricultural products from the farm to consumers more efficiently could result in large gains to producers, consumers, and India's overall economy, which clearly highlights the need for improving this sector.

Body

Agricultural marketing refers to process which involves moving the agricultural produce from place of origin to that of consumers. An efficient marketing system is essential for developing and also maximizing returns from agricultural production but there are many challenges in this regard, where the key areas that require immediate reforms to improve the efficacy of agricultural marketing include –

1. Movement, storage, and pricing restrictions on food commodities: The Essential Commodities Act allows central and state governments to administratively impose movement, storage, pricing, and quality restrictions on most food commodities. These restrictions are a major source of policy risk for agribusiness investment, particularly in larger scale firms that hold relatively large stocks or operate across state borders.
2. Middlemen Menace: Presence of too many middlemen result in higher cost of marketing of agriculture produce. As per a study, the share of middlemen in case of rice was 31 per cent, in case of vegetable was 29.5 per cent and in case of fruits was 46.5 per cent.
3. Agricultural marketing restrictions: State agricultural marketing laws have historically required all farm produce to be sold in government regulated markets and prohibited private investment in markets and vertical coordination or integration between agribusinesses and farmers.
4. Lack of storage facilities in markets: There is no proper storage or warehousing facilities for farmers in the villages where they can store their agriculture produce. Thus causing farmers to sell their surplus produce at very low and un-remunerative price.
5. Scale limitations on agricultural processing firms: Although most scale restrictions have been removed, agricultural marketing and processing remain dominated by small-scale firms.

6. Inadequate Transportation facilities: Poor road transportation facilities and links in rural areas affect movement of agriculture produce. Indian farmers cannot reach nearby mandis to sell their produce at a fair price.

7. Credit policies: The high cost and limited availability of credit likely restricted new investment in agriculture and agribusiness during the 1990s. Terms and availability for institutional credit have improved significantly since 2000, but a large share of farmers and agribusinesses still depend on high-cost credit from traditional moneylenders.

8. Absence of grading and standardisation as well as market information: Lack of knowledge of grading affects Indian farmers to fetch good price Indian farmers. Also, there is absence of market intelligence or information system in India. Indian farmers are not aware of the ruling prices of their produce prevailing in big markets.

9. Adulteration of Commercial Crops: Adulteration i.e., mixing of inferior produce freely with superior produce is very common. Adulteration in cash crops and food-crops has assumed tremendous proportion in India.

Measures by Government to overcome the Challenges –

- The three farm laws which were recently brought in to overcome the challenges of agro-marketing. These include: The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 (ECA), The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (FPTC), The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020.

- The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation formulated a Central Sector scheme for Promotion of National Agriculture Market through Agri-Tech Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) through provision of the common e-platform.

- Electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) to connect all APMC mandis across states through an electronic portal, thus benefitting both farmers and consumers.

- Agriculture export policy, 2018 which aims to double agriculture exports from $30 billion to $ 60 billion by 2022.

- Development and Strengthening of Grading and Standardization System: Assigning 'AGMARK' to graded products which ensure good quality and also command a better price in the market.

- PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana for creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.

Conclusion

As NITI Aayog's three year agenda focuses on reforming the agricultural market so that farmers are empowered to sell their produce to whomsoever they wish. The recent measures are taken by the government in this light will be helpful to create an efficient nation-wide market and will also ensure rise in income of farmers in turn contributing to achieve the target to double farmers income by 2022.

47. The government must stop depending on petrol, diesel taxes to bridge its fiscal deficit. Do you agree? Substantiate your views.

Approach

Candidate is required to outline the current scenario of petrol price hikes and management of fiscal balance sheet. With a way forward answer can be concluded with alternative sources.

Introduction

Retail prices of petrol and diesel have been rising over the past several weeks. In some parts of the country, the retail selling price of petrol has crossed Rs 100 a litre. Globally, oil prices have been rising because of resurgence in demand, and an increase in the retail prices of petrol and diesel is an outcome of that.

Body

Why prices of petrol and diesel are high?

- Taxes constitute a high proportion of the retail price of petrol. When tax revenues were hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, the government raised the excise duty on petrol and diesel in March 2020 and again in May 2020 to garner revenues. Households did not feel the pain of the rise in excise duties because global crude oil prices had crashed.
- Despite a slump in international crude oil prices due to the pandemic, the prices of petrol and diesel did not decline. The gains were adjusted against the excise duty hike to provide a cushion to the government's tight fiscal situation.

What is the impact?

- There are two consequences of the high duty. First, it hurts consumer pockets and can be inflationary. The rise in crude oil prices in recent weeks, amid the elevated excise duties, is causing retail prices of petrol and diesel to rise. High fuel prices will feed into higher inflation.
- Second, it creates excessive fiscal dependence on petroleum products. Petrol and diesel have been easy targets for raising revenues for the government. The government needs to diversify its sources of revenue and reduce its dependence on oil for bridging its fiscal deficit.
- The RBI's MPC has raised concerns over the inflationary impact of rising crude oil prices and high indirect taxes on petrol and diesel. The MPC has called for a calibrated reduction in high indirect taxes on petrol and diesel to contain the build-up of inflationary pressures in the economy.

Oil prices mechanism in India –

- The share of tax revenues from oil in the government's gross tax revenue has shown a steady increase. Between 2014 and 2016, when global crude oil prices were declining, the government raised the excise duty on petrol and diesel on multiple occasions.
- In the long run, India has been shifting away from petrol price controls. India imports nearly 85 per cent of its oil needs and since the domestic prices are benchmarked to international rates, retail prices are increasing.
- The system of price controls put stress on the finances of oil marketing companies as well as of the government. In 2010, on the recommendations of the expert group on a viable and sustainable system of pricing of petroleum products, petrol prices were made market determined.
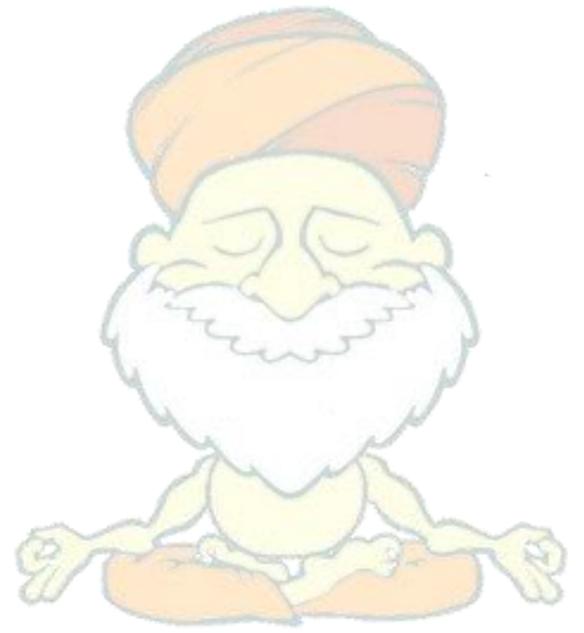
Alternative energy sources –

- Environmentalists concerned about global warming may not object to high taxes on petrol and diesel as they constitute a carbon tax and discourage greater use. Studies indicate that India's oil needs will be more than any other country by 2040.
- But carbon taxes are inadequate to move towards renewable sources of energy. There is also a need to incentivise the use of alternate energy sources like natural gas and solar power.
- Excessive fiscal dependence on oil can discourage the move towards renewable sources of energy. Further, until public transport that depends on renewable power is created, increasing fuel prices by higher excise is only going to pinch pockets without offering a long-term solution.

Fiscal calculation –

- A cut of Rs 5.8 per litre in petrol and diesel taxes to offset rising crude oil prices would result in a loss of revenue to the tune of Rs 87,200 crore, which is nearly 0.39 per cent of GDP. The Barclays report suggested that this would raise inflation by around 56 basis points, given the current level of inflation and size of the fiscal deficit.
- The government's priorities are firmly in favour of supporting the post-COVID recovery and it would thus be more likely to opt for lower inflation and a higher fiscal deficit in the short term.
- If the government reduces taxation on petrol and diesel, its revenue will be impacted. To compensate, the government could have to increase direct tax on sectors that saw growth during the Covid-19 pandemic. But a direct tax may become politically counter-productive.
- Secondly, any further reduction in revenue would widen the fiscal deficit gap. In a year, when the government is ready to borrow money for its capital expenditure, a widening fiscal deficit would ultimately make borrowing more expensive.

Conclusion

It is necessary to look out for alternative mechanisms to bridge gap of fiscal deficit. But that can be achieved only in the long run. In the uncertain times of global recession government is heavily relying on petrol for revenues. With GST still taking shape it will be possible with strong GST and more tax compliance to reduce dependence on petrol duties.

48. What is the recent debate over minimum support price (MSP)? What are your views on the same? Discuss.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to explain Minimum support Price (MSP) and debate surrounding it in India's agricultural sector. Further, you need to discuss your views with regards to the MSP debate.

Introduction

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices. The minimum support prices are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

Body

- The MSP system was started in 1966-67 for wheat and was expanded further to include other essential food crops, which was then sold to the poor under subsidised rates under the public distribution system (PDS). In 1966, wheat's MSP was Rs 54 per quintal. Currently, it is at Rs 1,975 per quintal.
- The Centre currently fixes MSPs for 23 farm commodities — 7 cereals, 5 pulses, 7 oilseeds and 4 commercial crops. The CACP considers various factors such as the cost of cultivation and production, productivity of crops, and market prices for the determination of MSPs.
- The National Commission on Farmers (Chaired by Prof. M. S. Swaminathan) in 2006 had recommended that MSPs must be at least 50% more than the cost of production. This is the first debate with regards to MSP where farmer's organisations and protestors are demanding implementation of these recommendations.
- The CACP calculates cost of production at three levels: (i) A2, which includes cost of inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, labour; (ii) A2+FL, which includes the implied cost of family labour (FL); and (iii) C2, which includes the implied rent on land and interest on capital assets over and above A2+FL.
- The government claims the A2+FL as the cost of production and decides MSP 50% above this price whereas farmers consider C2 as cost of production and demand MSP based on it. Even the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) is not clear on the definition of cost of production and thus there is need to bring in more clarity in this regard.
- Next debate surrounding the MSP issue is with regards to provide legal guarantee for the minimum support prices (MSPs) that the Centre declares for various crops every year. Currently, there is no statutory backing for these prices or any law mandating their implementation.

- There are two ways it can be done. The first is to force private buyers to pay it. In this case, no crop can be purchased below the MSP like sugarcane procurement and the second route is the government itself buying the entire crop that farmers offer at the MSP. Many argue that the government undertaking to buy at MSP is definitely better than forcing private players.

- But the entire proposition of legal guarantee for MSP is fraught with numerous challenges and also issues with the concept of MSP itself. Increasingly, procuring farm produce at an MSP is seen more of an appeasement strategy to cultivate a vote-bank.

- Data show that procurement of food grains by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in January 2021 has overshot the buffer-stock limit and the country's food grains reserves are more than 2.7 times the norm. This is more than the country's demands for food security and welfare schemes such as distribution of free wheat and rice under the PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojna.

- The economic cost of excess rice and wheat with the FCI beyond the buffer-stock norm is a whopping ₹1,50,000 crore. Further, the losses borne by the FCI due to mountains of wheat and rice spoiling as the stocks exceed its total capacity protected and scientific storage capacity needs to be considered too.

- Further, there has been large scale imbalance in procurement due to historical factors. E.g. - Procurement of wheat from Punjab at the MSP amounts to 99.5 per cent of the total stocks offered by farmers for sale.

- There is also waste of tax payer's money due to continuous raising of MSP for political gains and farmers producing wheat and paddy regardless of what the market actually demands. Also, the entire PDS system can be jeopardized due to issues arising out of legally assured MSP and thus affecting the vulnerable poor the most.

- There are also the environmental costs, especially due to depleting water-table and stubble burning. E.g. - Punjab's current cropping pattern of growing paddy, which is a water guzzler (one kg of rice requires 2500-5500 litres of water), is economically unsustainable and groundwater depletion is a serious concern (the groundwater level on 92 per cent of Punjab farms has depleted by over 0.60 metres annually). Flawed MSP system encourages such abuse of resources.

- Last, but not the least, data show that hardly 6 per cent of farmers are able to benefit from the MSP. Thus, making it a law will keep a substantial section of small and marginal farmers outside this privilege and lead to socio-economic inequality apart from geographical imbalance.

Way Forward –

- Farmer awareness about the benefits of crop diversification so as to produce more pulses to ensure nutritional security and prevent supply-side shocks.

- Impetus to improve the agriculture infrastructure should be provide such as cold storage building, warehouses for perishable production, so in case of surplus production they will not be wasted. For instance, in this light a new

pan India Central Sector Scheme-Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is established.

- NITI Aayog is working on alternative mechanism. A counterpart of the MSP is the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), under which the state government procures perishable commodities like vegetable items.
- Price Deficiency Payment (PDP): Niti Aayog also proposed PDP; PDP is to support the farmers in case the market price falls below Minimum Support Price (MSP) is called, "Price Deficiency Payment". This system aims to provide a part (for example, 70-75 %) of the difference between the MSP and the market price to the farmers.
- Some states like, Haryana government launched Bhavantar Bharapai Yojaan for vegetables, the government pays the farmers the difference between model rate (the average prices in major mandis) and the minimum support prices (MSPs). It can be better alternative.

Conclusion

Along with market reforms for agricultural marketing envisaged through new farm acts, government should also increase the public farm infrastructure which will pose a tough competition in the free market and help ensure healthy environment of public private cooperation towards the major of goal of doubling farmer's income by 2022.

49. What has been the recent trend of employment in the country? What factors can be attributed to the current employment scenario in India? Discuss.

Approach

Candidate is required to outline the employment trend in context of pandemic and recession and can discuss the scenario of future employment trends in India and factors responsible for it.

Introduction

With thousands of national and multinational companies using India as a facilitator for expansion into the global economy, the country has acquired an image of a new global player on the world stage. These companies enjoy business presence spanning diverse clusters; from IT, Healthcare, Automobiles, Telecommunications, Hospitality, Construction to Education, Logistics, and Manufacturing and are known to create a massive number of jobs.

Body

Employment trend in India –

- Population in India is at its all-time high and growing. As per Wikipedia, the youth literacy rate is 91.2%.
- Yet India's employment situation is bad, especially with the current ongoing fight against coronavirus. The unemployment rate as of 03 May 2020 stands high at 24.1%, according to CMEI unemployment data.
- In the year 2019, there was a predictable slowdown in the economic growth and labour market, leading to employers of major companies racking their brains to overcome this crisis.
- The Indian marketplace, although witnessing the worst at the moment, sees a range of opportunities and employment trends in the offing.
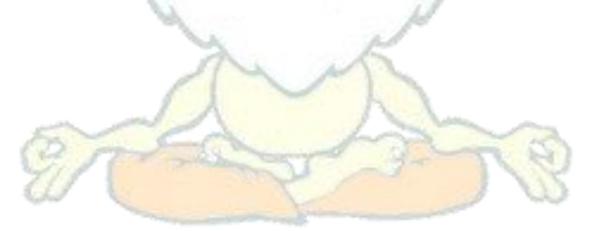
What the factors driving employment scenario?

- **Skilled employees –** One major employment trend thought by major companies is to upskill their existing staff as hiring new recruits would increase their budget, which they could ill afford and be counterproductive. The recruitment experts concluded that a major percentage of industries did not wish to increase the strength of the workforce but made sure to retain the right people for the required role.
- **Technological growth** - In simple terms, it can be defined as the unification of two technological concepts that we are already aware of for quite some time now — Artificial Intelligence and Automation. By using this combination of artificial intelligence and automation, an organization can automate processes end to end. A typical end-to-end process involves developing and

testing products, personalizing products and services, managing customer interactions and many more.

- **Work from home -** A report published in the Harvard Business Review says employees felt that commuting to their workplace was more stressful than their jobs itself. With the current pandemic that the world is facing, work from home is one trend that will definitely stand out. Many studies have been conducted on remote working and suggest that it helps employees to have a work-life balance, thus reducing stress and increasing productivity.

- **Contractual employment -** Almost half the Indian population is engaged in agriculture, dairy farming, horticulture and many related occupations. With millions of migrant workers, most of them into agriculture, they lack stable employment. Recently, the Indian labour workforce suffered due to low productivity growth and widening income inequality. Slowdown in the construction jobs, mounting educated youth unemployment and also lack of quality jobs have resulted in an increased Indian labour market.

- **Jobs in demand -** With the advanced technology available at our disposal, the jobs to look for in the coming decade are Digital Marketing, Artificial intelligence, Data Scientist, Cyber Security, Drone Handling. Besides the above mentioned jobs, careers as Dieticians, Robot Engineers, and Event Managers are in great demand and will continue to do so.

Conclusion

The employment trends in India looks upward but the nation has to be ready with their talent pool for the new employment demands and the skills that employers are seeking for. Reskilling and upskilling will turn out to be the winner in order to stay competent and updated with the always-hungry-for-skilled-talent workplace.

50. You must be closely following the ongoing farmers' protests. Are the fears of corporate takeover of agriculture misplaced? Share your views.

Approach

As the question is asking you to share your views so you have to give your thoughts about the particular issue.

Introduction

Some of India's farmers are among the country's poorest people, but government policies have long protected them from the ravages of open market prices. But as per the farmers that is changing now. A set of three laws passed in September aims to deregulate India's enormous agriculture sector. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said they will liberate farmers from the tyranny of middlemen. But many farmers fear that they stand to lose more than they could gain from the new regulations and that the main beneficiaries will be agricultural corporations with gargantuan financial firepower.

Body

ARE THE FEARS OF CORPORATE TAKEOVER OF AGRICULTURE MISPLACED?

India's new farm laws make it easier for farmers to bypass government-regulated markets (known locally as mandis) and sell produce directly to private buyers. They can now enter into contracts with private companies, a practice known in India as contract farming, and sell across state borders.
The new regulations also allow traders to stockpile food. This is a shift away from prohibitions against hoarding, which could make it easier for traders to take advantage of rising prices, such as during a pandemic. Such practices were criminal offences under the old rules.

THE FEARS OF CORPORATE TAKEOVER OF AGRICULTURE ARE NOT MISPLACED –

- The reform policies would only make farmers vulnerable to market forces. The deepening of capitalist market forces has already ruined agriculture, agricultural communities, farmer's lives and livelihoods in India. The market-led industrial approach to agriculture has already been driving farmers out of business and reinforces agrarian crisis, forcing them to commit suicide.
- In the United States of America, farmers today are exposed to corporate exploitation and abuse because of similar reform policies. Liberalised agricultural policies have aided the growth of very few corporations that control American agriculture today. Such deepening penetration of market forces and the growth of industrial agriculture have led to the rise of four corporations that control around 40% of the agricultural market in the USA. It has destroyed the livelihood of small and medium farmers, rural communities

and swallowed family farms there. This is because corporations, while suppressing the price of farm produce, have simultaneously increased its selling price.

- Many developed countries have witnessed land grabs by big corporations and farmers with the growth of corporatisation of agriculture. In India, the congress-led governments introduced such practices in the name of special economic zones (SEZS).

- Now with agricultural policy reforms, the current government plans to liberalise land laws further by which corporate takeover of land from the small and medium farmers in India will be easy. The corporate-led industrial agriculture in India will create conditions of industrial feudalism and corporate landlordism on the one hand, and consumerist individualism on the other.

- The corporatisation of agriculture will simply destroy the social fabric of agricultural and rural communities. Cooperative culture is converted into a competitive culture that would ruin rural communities with the growth of individualist consumerism. Market forces do not believe in diversification and they promote economies of standardisation dangerous for diversity within Indian agriculture.

- Market-led industrial agriculture dominated by corporations can never be an alternative for India and Indian farmers and the government needs to find ways to invest in agricultural cooperatives to empower farmers and generate employment by diversifying it. India and Indian farmers need socially responsible, environmentally sustainable and economically rewarding agricultural policies, and egalitarian land reforms to increase their income and where agricultural producers can directly interact with their consumers. Such an agricultural market economy would be really open, free and fair.

Conclusion

Farmers have some genuine concerns. A big one is that the new rules remove many of their safeguards. More than 86 percent of India's cultivated farmland is controlled by smallholder farmers who own less than two hectares (five acres) of land each.

They fear that they just do not have enough bargaining power to get the kinds of prices they need for a decent standard of living when they negotiate to sell their produce to larger companies. They feel that the government has left them at the mercy of big corporations. Without strong institutional arrangements, the free market may harm lakhs of unorganised small farmers, who have been remarkably productive and shored up the economy even during a pandemic hence there is a need for strong institutional arrangements before unleashing the laissez-faire policy in Indian agriculture.

51. What are the advantages of direct benefit transfers (DBT)? Critically evaluate the performance of DBT in recent years.

Approach

Students are expected to write answer in two parts. In the first part advantages of the DBT are to be mentioned and in the second part critical evaluation of the DBT over the years has to be given with appropriate examples.

Introduction

Direct Benefit Transfer or DBT is a part of the Indian government's anti-poverty programme launched in 2013. Here, the government is trying to alter the method of transferring subsidies. Under the DBT, subsidies are transferred to the people directly through their bank accounts. The primary aim of this Direct Benefit Transfer program is to bring transparency and terminate pilferage from the distribution of funds sponsored by the Central Government of India. In DBT, benefit or subsidy will be directly transferred to citizens living below the poverty line. The Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS), being implemented by the Office of Controller General of Accounts acts as the common platform for routing DBT. CPSMS can be used for the preparation of the beneficiary list, digitally signing the same and processing of payments in the bank accounts of the beneficiary using the Aadhaar Payment Bridge.

Body

Advantages of direct benefit transfer –

- The primary aim of DBT program is to bring transparency and terminate pilferage from distribution of funds sponsored by Central Government of India. The program will lead to simpler and faster flow of information/funds and ensure accurate targeting of the beneficiaries, de-duplication and reduction of fraud.
- DBT scheme allows time-bound transfers hence avoids delays in transferring money, which is one of the biggest problems' beneficiaries are facing.
- This scheme eliminates intermediaries and rents for 'fair price shops' because subsidies and benefits of welfare schemes are transferred directly. This will help Indian economy in the long run as the structural expenditure will be reduced.
- As everyone can purchase goods at market price, there will be healthy competition between the sellers in the market. The problem of middlemen diverting subsidized grains to markets will be eliminated.
- PAHAL is the first major programme in India that provided subsidies through DBT. With nearly 150 million registered beneficiaries, it is probably the world's largest DBT programme ever. The goal of the DBT is subsidy reform

and not doing away with subsidies. It targets beneficiaries effectively so that they flow only to the intended beneficiaries.

Critical evaluation of DBT –

- Cash transfer: Under this scheme, cash is directly transferred from the government to the individual beneficiaries. For instance, some of the examples are the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and MGNREGA.

- In-kind benefits from the government to beneficiaries: Components of the schemes or the schemes itself are a part of this category. The government provides beneficiaries with in-kind benefits via an intermediate agency.

- The government usually bears the cost to buy the goods that can be used for public distribution as well as for providing them to the beneficiaries that they have targeted. The beneficiaries then get these services or goods for a very low price or for free. e.g., Manufacturers of fertilizers receive 100% of subsidy after fertiliser is delivered to the farmer.

- Other forms of transfers: Incentives, allowances, etc., that are provided to Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and community workers come under this category. They are provided such allowances because of the service they provide to other beneficiaries and to the community. e.g., NABARD agri-loan mechanisms.

- Hence, the flexibility of offering DBT via different methods ensures the scalability of the DBT, as DBT can be modified or moulded as per need of different sectors.

- The government has been able to save as much as ₹28,699 crore in the current fiscal, between April and December, official data showed. In 2018-19, as many as many as 590 million individuals gained from the government's DBT scheme, under which subsidy is directly transferred to the beneficiaries' bank account.

- With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of lockdown and social distancing norms, DBT emerged as a boon in providing succour and relief to millions of citizens whose livelihood was impacted. As the crisis loomed large, a lockdown was imposed by the Government for 21 days. PFMS recorded the highest number of transactions in a single day on 30th March, 2020 of 2.19 crore transactions largely driven by DBT payments. Cash amounts were transferred using the digital payments technology vehicle, Public Financial Management System (PFMS) under Central Schemes (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

- Between March 24 and April 17, the DBT payments under all the central sector/centrally sponsored schemes through PFMS amounted to Rs 27,442.08 crore in the accounts of 11.42 crore beneficiaries through schemes like PM-KISAN, Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), National Social Assistance Program (NSAP), Prime Minister's Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), National Health Mission (NHM), scholarship schemes of various ministries

through the National Scholarship Portal (NSP). In addition, states like UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh also leveraged on the DBT platform of PFMS.

However, there are still issues associated with the working of DBT which are as follows –

- Aadhar registrations presently covered around 91% of population. Since DBT is linked with Aadhar for schemes, there is need to improve Aadhar linkage to 100% so that not a single person can be left out.
- Low level of digital literacy in the rural areas poses one of the major challenges in implementing this mechanism.
- India has reached 81% financial inclusion and this will potentially exclude people from the rural background. Lack of banking facilities will exclude people to access facilities. Here, governments PM- Jan Dhan Yojana will play a pivotal role.
- Bank Correspondents face numerous challenges to reach people, who do not have bank account. Banking correspondents also struggle with connectivity and technical problems. Banking services at rural level needs to be improved to reach benefits to all.

Conclusion

DBT played a major role in sustaining life especially of the under-privileged segments of the society impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, helping millions in providing immediate relief in tiding over the turbulent period. Hence, in a heterogeneous country like India different sectors have different objectives and challenges. Here, DBT mechanism due to its scalability and reliability can play a major role by fulfilling & addressing sector specific objectives and challenges to ensure good governance for all.

52. How are social media platforms changing societal norms and values? Explain with the help of suitable examples.

Approach

Question is very straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about role of social media platforms in changing societal norms and values and explanation with appropriate use of examples as demanded by the question explicitly.

Introduction

Social norms are the rules governing acceptable behaviour within a group. Society is governed by social norms, however, the law has yet to catch up to the speed at which the Internet—and particularly social media—has developed. Prior research suggests that social media influences through two effects: the individual or direct effect (private) or the social or indirect effect (public). In the individual effect, media information about new norms may persuade individuals to accept them. In the social effect, the information creates common knowledge of a norm and enhances social coordination as individuals more readily accept the information if they believe others have also accepted it. Platforms like facebook, twitter,watsapp Instagram etc have played a big role in influencing individuals and groups in order to bring a change in the collective as well as individual behaviour.

Body:

How social media platforms change societal norms and values –

- The traditional social norm of Privacy is completely changed, people aren't worrying to post confidential Information because of the LIKE-Hunger or Peer pressure or both. Also values of empathy and compassion have become redundant e.g. filming road accident victims rather than helping them has been one of the most ill effects of social media platforms. Recently a fight between two groups in Bagpat Uttar pradesh was filmed by people watching them rather than helping them to end fight this incident was highlighted by every media group all around the world. This shows lack of good Samaritan ship and role of social media in it.
- Social norm of face to face meetings have been completely changed people prefer texting and virtual meetings rather than face to face meetings thus creating overall change in the values of weness, brotherhood etc. found mostly among young people.
- Social media has created a new breed of 'influencers' – social media users with established credibility in a specific industry, these influencers typically have a larger audience and often persuade others through their content. It is through these influencer profiles, a recentralization of corporate influence

was discovered. Companies are investing in influencers to generate content that can shift social norms.

- Social movements have been tied to the Internet as a space for launching or reinforcing their activities and interactions, and the Internet has been found in many cases to be useful to achieve their objectives, especially emphasizes the potential influence of people coming together in digital social networks and forming against government and corporations which formerly controlled channels of communication. These networked social movements born in the digital age have power because they are autonomous, free from institutional control, and operate in different venues, such as online as well as offline social networks and public space. Yellow vest movements in France, recent toolkit case in India.

- Social media has altered the way people generally vote or buy. The recent Cambridge Analytica scandal of 2016 US elections is the best example. Recent Hook-up apps are changing the whole fabric of relationship norms like the way they meet, the course of relation, etc.

- Parents generally spend some time on their children's academics and growth. Now both of them are busy on social media, leading to neglect of child behaviour in crucial formative years.

- According to a survey an individual was willing to give a wrong answer just to conform to the majority view. This explains the impact of fake news online, which contributes to a polarised society. People are lacking Pure judgments, trying to imitate the group leading to a severe value crisis in the society. The trolling of women has brought to the fore the disturbing reality of online violence and abuse women face in India. Exposure of hatred to children at a young age because of cyber bully in New ethical issues are emerging because of privacy concerns, social injustice and ignorance, effects on family values etc.

Conclusion

Social media is an open road, with bumps and turns all in our way. Its use is inevitable in this digital world, so protecting oneself from its Negativity and focussing more on real-life than our social life is the best way ahead.

53. Certain political parties have floated the idea of giving remuneration to women homemakers. What are your views on this? Discuss.

Approach

Question is straight forward in its approach students are expected to express their views about the idea of remuneration to women by the political parties by giving a detailed explanation with examples as well.

Introduction

The expanding role of freebies in Indian Politics in the last decade has become an intriguing question in the Indian political economy. Freebies have become a strategy to woo voters later. The Election Commission, earlier 2019, has revealed an analytical emphasis on the distribution of freebies and attractions to voters by almost all the political parties. Recent announcement by a political party of giving remuneration to homemakers is an election freebie promise but it has a larger perspective through ideological and economic aspects as well.

Body

Remuneration to homemakers has been advocated by feminist groups from a long time. It involves paying homemaker against the work done in home such as cooking, looking after the elderly, washing clothes etc. so as to bring them in parity with those working outside home and giving recognition to their efforts as well. In these times where societies are largely patriarchal efforts of homemakers usually go unnoticed and is not considered work at all.

Idea of giving remuneration to homemakers is a drastic step towards change in following ways –

- One extremely significant dimension that has gone largely ignored in the purview of the measurement of economic activity – is household unpaid work by women. This is the flip side of women's low labour force participation, which is among the lowest in the world in India. Women who are not in the workforce are not sitting at home enjoying leisure time – they're engaged in child and parent care, cooking, cleaning and performing other household chores. The fact that women's household work is unpaid and therefore goes unrecorded as part of the GDP understates women's contribution to the economy. According to research by the International Monetary Fund, raising women's participation in the labour force to the same level as men can boost India's GDP by 27 percent. One way to do this is by giving homemakers, the majority of whom are women, a salary.
- As a matter of public policy, schemes targeted at economically vulnerable households can and should be fine-tuned by recording the value of women's work. Finally, as a matter of macroeconomics, capturing women's unpaid

labour would give a truer picture of GDP and, therefore, a more realistic assessment of the size of the economy and of economic growth.

- This will help shatter the stereotypical image of Indian women who are portrayed as domestic and social parasites living on their husbands' earnings and contributing nothing.
- A large number of women live with domestic violence and cruelty because they are economically dependent on others, mainly their husbands. Time-use data from 2019 gathered by the National Sample Survey Organisation revealed that only about a quarter of men and boys above six years engaged in unpaid household chores, compared to over four-fifths of women paying remuneration to homemakers will ensure their financial independence to a large extent and is thus an inclusionary measure as well.
- Supreme Court also advocated that value of the work of homemaker must be at par with the office going individual and fixing renumeration and recognising the value of the labour of homemaker is the acceptance of the idea that these activities contribute to the economic condition of the family in a real way.
- Once recognised as work, this arena of unpaid domestic labour that is dominated almost entirely by women can become one where women can demand some degree of parity in terms of time and energy expended on it.
- It moves us towards a more holistic understanding of labour: Labour isn't purely tied to the exchange value of a service on the market, and recognises an extremely intimate form of labour that has proved essential to keeping the unit of the family intact and functional

However there are some challenges as well which are as follows –

- Paying home-makers would disincentivize even the educated women to stay indoors and receive some sort of salary. This would impact the overall LFPR of women which is already low.
- In rural areas, where patriarchal mind-set exists women would serve as proxies to their husbands. The amount they would receive would directly be spent by their husbands leaving them disempowered (financially).
- It would burden the already curtailed fiscal space of the state governments which are currently reeling under the high fiscal deficit in the post-Covid scenario and would therefore have far-reaching impact on the state-exchequer.

Conclusion

Needless to say, women constitute almost half the population and their needs and issues have to be addressed. A homemaker doesn't need any favours. She is already contributing to the economy. A salary for her work at home would be a tool towards her empowerment, give her a life of dignity. Idea of remuneration isn't new it needs a serious thought on part of policy makers to bring equality in the society which has been marred by discrimination from quite a long time now.

54. What are your views on the idea of domicile-based reservation in private jobs? Substantiate your views.

Approach

Candidate is required to give context of the question and then provide the constitutional argument and Supreme Court judgements on the same. Citing some global examples answer can be concluded with the future of workforce in globalised world.

Introduction

The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2021 provides for reservation for a local candidate, which has been defined under the law as someone "domiciled in State of Haryana". Under the law, every employer is required to employ 75% local candidates for posts where the gross monthly salary is not more than ₹50,000.

Body

What constitution says?

- Article 16(2) states that "no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the State".
- However, Article 16(3) of the Constitution provides an exception by saying that Parliament may make a law "prescribing" a requirement of residence for jobs in a particular state. This power vests solely in the Parliament, not state legislatures.

Is domicile based reservation justified?

- When the Constitution came into force, India turned itself into one nation from a geographical unit of individual principalities and the idea of the universality of Indian citizenship took root.
- India has common citizenship, which gives citizens the liberty to move around freely in any part of the country, the requirement of a place of birth or residence cannot be qualifications for granting employment in any state.
- Equality enshrined in the Constitution is not mathematical equality and does not mean all citizens will be treated alike without any distinction. To this effect, the Constitution underlines two distinct aspects which together form the essence of equality law non-discrimination among equals, and affirmative action to equalise the un equals.
- While issue of domicile based reservation in public employment is widely discussed, and as a state instrument can be used for public welfare. But the

private sector is highly competitive and in a global emerging market this step stands regressive.

- India in past protested against the same law, which makes it mandatory for firms to employ locals in Kuwait. This led to massive job loss for Indians. If we apply the same logic, state has to make sure that meritocracy be basis of any private job, and not the privilege of being born in particular state.
- We live in highly integrated world. Free flow of goods, services and labour forms basis of future. With this step we might be closing our gates to new talent and innovative ideas.

What is the view of Supreme Court?

- The Supreme Court has ruled against reservation based on place of birth or residence. In 1984, ruling in Dr Pradeep Jain v Union of India, the issue of legislation for "sons of the soil" was discussed. The court expressed an opinion that such policies would be unconstitutional but did not expressly rule on it as the case was on different aspects of the right to equality.
- In a subsequent ruling in Sunanda Reddy v State of Andhra Pradesh (1995), the Supreme Court affirmed the observation in Pradeep Jain to strike down a state government policy that gave 5% extra weightage to candidates who had studied with Telugu as the medium of instruction.
- Some of the States are adopting 'sons of the soil' policies prescribing reservation or preference based on domicile or residence requirement for employment or appointment…Prima facie this would seem to be constitutionally impermissible, said the court.
- Though the argument presented is in relation to public employment, the same logic can be applied to private sector. Private sector is strength of our emerging economy, these reservations will ultimately limit the options and is against the fundamental rights.

Conclusion

India has one of the largest working population in the world. The demographic dividend India enjoys, if not utilised well will turn into disaster. In the chronic unemployment scenario we have to create an environment of competent, skilled and secure employment opportunities. India as integrated market will emerge only when we address this inward looking attitude. Indian Citizen from any corner of country enjoys fundamental right of equality and shall not be deprived of opportunities at any level.

55. Does India really need a population control bill? Share your views.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to share his/her views regarding the necessity of population control bill in India, where the views should be properly substantiated.

Introduction

India's population is going to overtake China in 2026, according to a UN report 'World Population Prospects 2019'. This ever-increasing rate of population in India is considered as the root of most of the problems the country faces. In this light, the recent private member bill introduced in Rajya Sabha i.e. Population Control Bill, 2020, becomes an important point of discussion.

Body

- Population control is a policy of attempting to limit the growth of a population in numbers, focusing especially in the poor and densely populated parts of the world where people are not aware of the consequences of overpopulation.
- In this regard, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his 2019 Independence Day speech, raised concerns regarding population explosion and its ill-effects. Consequently, the need for a population control bill can be seen from the following points –

1. India accounts for about 17 per cent of the world population with only 2.2 per cent of the world's land mass. The increasing population has resulted in an increasing pressure on the country's limited natural resources.
2. Despite the decrease in fertility rate, according to United Nations World Population Prospects report India's population will continue to increase up till 2050.
3. As the population increases, the demand for new cars and houses also increases leading to effect on the air quality due to the emission of harmful gases like carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. This leads to global warming, a rise in sea levels, and changing climate patterns as well as more waste generation and associated issues.
4. In India, there already exists great amount of income and wealth inequality (Oxfam report). Overpopulation also leads to increase in the unemployment of the country as the number of people exceeds the number of jobs available in India.
5. Overpopulation might create tensions between the States or even among a few countries for the demand of resources leading to conflicts and probably war. Since vast sections of population are dependent on unsustainable resources, grave consequences can be seen across vulnerable sections.

- Indeed, India's rapid increase in population is becoming a threat to the resources and its people, affecting the social, economic, and cultural spheres of the country. However, as of data until August 2019, India had no contemporary 'population explosion'. Thus, population control bill is not considered a necessity for India due to the following factors –

1. According to the 2018-2019 Economic Survey, India's population grew 1.3% a year from 2011 to 2016, down from 2.5% a year from 1971 to 1981. The TFR was 2.2 in 2017 – close to the replacement level fertility of 2.1. The survey estimated the TFR in 2021 could be 1.8. Thus, population growth rate is declining at a faster rate.
2. The International Convention on Population and Development or Cairo Convention is a bar in bringing legislation for population control. The convention was against forced sterilizations and thus Indian government, being a signatory to it, can't bring in forceful means of population control.
3. Researchers argue that it remains difficult to establish a robust connection between population growth and development. Countries like South Korea and Taiwan experienced rapid population growth throughout the second half of the 20th century without it negatively impacting their per capita income. Instead, between 1960-80, the average per capita income in South Korea and Taiwan was 6.2 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.
4. The biggest victims of the Population control Bill will be Indian women. Many women already can't choose to refuse marriage or to reproduce, and are forced to undergo non-voluntary birth control measures. These 'habits' may only intensify. Female infanticide will also likely worsen, from the current skew of 909 female births per 1,000 male births.
5. Further, according to an affidavit by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in SC, mentions that international experience shows that any coercion to have a certain number of children is counter-productive and leads to demographic distortions.
6. Also, analysis of the government's newly-released health data showed that such population control laws are unnecessary: in 19 of the 22 states and Union Territories for which data were released, women have fewer than two children, on average, which is less than the replacement level for population.

Instead of framing any law or legislation on population control, there are other measures that can be and are being taken by the Government to limit the population of the country. These measures are as follows –
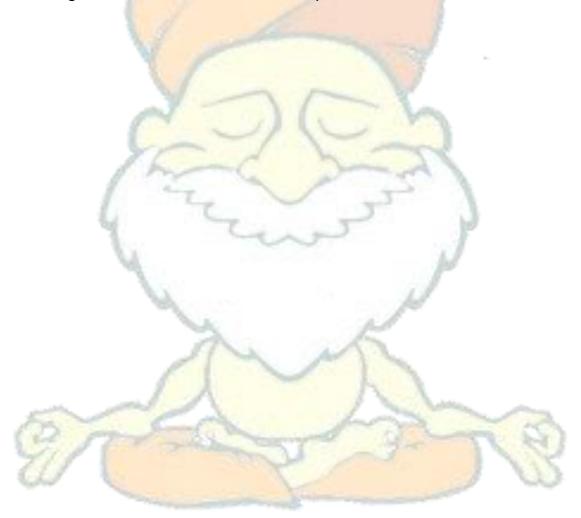
- Raising the status of women is an important social measure for population control as it will end the gender discrimination and improve child health.
- Educating the masses is another important aspect of controlling population as the people have to be made aware of the harmful consequences of overpopulation as well as the benefits of using contraceptive methods.
- The option of adoption should be popularized as there are many children who do not have families to take care of them. They have to live in

orphanages or organizations that only help these children to stay alive and survive and also stabilize the population.

• The government should provide families with incentives and financial aid for the adoption of birth control measures. Also, focus should be on specific districts with high population growth rates to tackle the problem effectively.

Conclusion

In a post-COVID-19 India, there is a need for increased spending on public health – and not bills that punish people for crimes they didn't commit. This will safeguard women's rights and contribute to a healthy population. Instead of population control Bills, India should consider a 'population investment bill' that takes the health, wellbeing and education of its citizens seriously.

56. Should OTT platforms be regulated by the government? Critically comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected to explain what the OTT platforms are. And then critically comment whether government should regulate OTT platforms in light of recent regulations rules.

Introduction

For the first time, the government, under the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, has brought in detailed guidelines for digital content on both digital media and Over the Top (OTT) platforms.

Body

Over-The-Top Platforms: OTT platforms are audio and video hosting and streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hotstar etc, which started out as content hosting platforms but soon branched out into the production and release of short movies, feature films, documentaries and web series themselves.

In India, there was no law or autonomous body to monitor and manage the digital contents provided on these OTT platforms and it was made available to the public at large without any filter or screening. Therefore government tightened its control over digital news media and OTT introducing a "soft-touch regulatory architecture."

- The idea is to create a level-playing field for all media, since print and television already worked under certain restriction.
- The new IT rules will lead to the empowerment of citizens. Since there is a mechanism for redressal and timely resolution of their grievances.
- It will ensure that social media platforms have to keep better checks and balances over their platforms. This will ensure the data is not shared unlawfully. This will ensure adherence to the rule of law.
- OTT platforms has to come up with a code of self-regulation, last draft of code of self-regulation had not allowed for a third-party intervention. Government has taken care of freedom of the press with certain responsibility and reasonable restrictions.
- The new IT rules enhance government regulation over social and digital media. This will enhance accountability and prevent arbitrary actions by digital platforms like the recent one by Twitter.
- These guidelines are on expected lines and are really quite mild compared to the kind of pre-censorship of content many were fearing,". The rules, had stemmed from the industry's failure in formulating a code of self-regulation that the government found satisfactory.

- Platforms will be required to implement parental locks for content classified as U/A 13+ or higher, and reliable age verification mechanisms for content classified as "A". This move will lead to consolidation in the OTT industry or shutting down of niche apps which have relied on obscene content.
- Disinformation (Fake and wrong information) of data can be controlled. Since there is proper regulatory mechanism, disinformation can be removed easily. This will reduce instances of fake news, violence, the spread of defamatory content and disruption of public order.
- Publishers of news on digital media will have to observe the norms of journalistic conduct of the Press Council of India and the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act.
- Giving due notice before removing content will prevent arbitrary removal of content. The imposition of print and electronic code of conduct on digital news media would ensure a level playing field for every media.

The legal architecture and new rules for OTT raise important concerns for free speech and fair regulation such as –

- The players and creators will have to probably re-look at the kind of content they want to make since these ratings will directly impact the storytelling and the commercials involved.
- The IT Act doesn't cover content authors and creators like news media. But rules have included them. This provides discretionary powers to the government.
- There are various categories of ratings now which may become more cumbersome for the content creator as well as the platform. Except animated films or series, all content currently on OTT platforms may fall into the U/A 16+ or the A category.
- Also, there will be ambiguity regarding certain films which may have already received CBFC certification. It is unclear whether the platform would need to incorporate the same certification or re-determine it based on these rules, which would lead to increasing compliance procedures.
- The rules allow the government to enforce a traceability mechanism. This simply means a threat to the user's privacy. It will hamper the end-to-end encryption of platforms like WhatsApp.
- As the new rules curtail free speech on digital platforms, there will be a sense of fear among the creators and hamper creativity.

Conclusion

Regulations are necessary to ensure that the content that gets featured on online streaming platforms remains within the scope of Article 19(2) of the constitution. A fine balance between freedom of speech and the need to curb the misuse in digital platforms have to be maintained. Both the government and the digital platforms will have to work together and fulfil this responsibility.

57. What challenges did urban India face during COVID-19? Discuss. What has been the overall efficacy of the response? Critically examine.

Approach

Student can discuss the issues urban population faced during the lockdown, with the help of some examples efficacy of response can be stated. In the conclusion way forward can be given to avoid such crisis in future.

Introduction

The state of our cities has been a matter of concern for decades. Be it air quality and unsafe drinking water, or now, the virus, the precarious nature of urban living has never been more pronounced. Covid pandemic has compelled us to think of new policy formulations our urban spaces.

Body

What challenges urban India faced during the pandemic?

- The growth of large cities can be attributed to their role as economic engines in a rapidly globalising world. Urban development programmes such as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (2005-2014) allocated the bulk of funds to large cities (70 per cent to large cities and 30 per cent to smaller towns).
- One of the most important problem we encountered is that the overburdened cities and containment. The congestion that plagues large cities has turned out to be their worst enemy during this crisis.
- This congestion is most evident in slums in large cities and poses a grave health and environmental challenge. The risk of contagious diseases is more potent in these areas as residents also suffer from a lack of basic services such as safe drinking water and sanitation.
- To ask them to navigate congestion and practise social distancing seems most ironic. It is no surprise then that many slums in Mumbai and Delhi have become COVID-19 containment zones.
- The health systems in megacities like Delhi and Mumbai are also overburdened and face a shortage of hospital staff and beds. Class I cities (more than a lakh population) have 1.4 beds per 1,000 people. Delhi has 1.5 beds per 1,000 people whereas Mumbai has one bed per 1,000 people.
- However, the urban support under the National Health Mission is just three per cent of the total allocation, while 97 per cent of the funds are set aside for rural areas.
- While the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) provides employment opportunities to rural households, there is no equivalent scheme for the poor in urban areas.

- The state of our cities has been a matter of concern for decades. Be it air quality and unsafe drinking water, or now, the virus, the precarious nature of urban living has never been more pronounced.
- Small towns that are urban in nature but rural in character are the most neglected in the current policy environment. They are forced to exist with poorer services and policy neglect while having to meet the demands of a large population.

What has been the response to this challenge?

- India focused on saving lives and livelihoods by its willingness to take short-term pain for long-term gain, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Response stemmed from the humane principle that: Human lives lost cannot be brought back GDP growth will recover from the temporary shock caused by the pandemic
- An early, intense lockdown provided a win-win strategy to save lives, and preserve livelihoods via economic recovery in the medium to long-term.
- But the health infrastructure of the urban spaces, which was already abysmal was upgraded to face the challenge of increasing cases. Lockdown created a massive unemployment crisis in urban areas, which was poorly handled.
- The labour migration and their struggles to reach their hometown will haunt our memory in years to come. The migrant crisis could have been handled in more sophisticated manner with more number of trains and mode of transportation available instantly.
- Testing and isolation infrastructure was ramped up with an effective pace, but the testing facility could achieve its potential only after the four months after the lockdown.
- Containment of infections in some areas like Dharavi in Mumbai presents us an example of what efficient surveillance and strict social distancing can achieve. After 3 weeks on intense lockdown, zero case was reported from Dharavi.
- Healthcare infrastructure from ventilators to extra beds were made available with an average speed in urban areas. Pandemic exposed the fragile condition of our urban healthcare facilities.
- Response to the pandemic has affected millions of people being exposed to unemployment, chronic poverty, malnutrition and crisis of food security. Urban areas failed to take the adequate measures in this aspect.

Conclusion

Covid-19 pandemic worsened already deteriorating unemployment situation in urban areas. Absence of employment guarantee schemes left daily wage labourers helpless and were compelled to migrate. Policy response was ill prepared but the resilient economy has started to show some good signs of v shaped recovery. Economic incentives will make an impact but we need to ramp up our healthcare system with lightning speed to avoid such a suffering of vulnerable.

58. Discuss the merits of mass rapid transit (MRT) systems? How is the current status of development of MRTs in Indian urban centres? Comment.

Approach

Question is asking you to comment therefore it is important to pick out the main points/core and give one's opinion based on the information or the arguments originated from the reading.

Introduction

MASS rapid transit (MRT) system is a rail system which is used for transporting passengers in urban areas. It is known by various other names such as mass transit, subway, underground railway or metro. The main characteristic of an MRT system is the ability to carry large numbers of people efficiently and forms the backbone of a city's public transport system together with other rail-based modes such as the light rail transit (LRT) systems, trams, monorails and commuter trains.

Body

THE MERITS OF MASS RAPID TRANSIT (MRT) SYSTEMS –

- Mass transit may be based on fixed route system such as subway trains, metros or non-fixed route system such as buses. It is potentially more economical, eco-friendly and less time consuming.
- In addition, it is the most competent way of reducing the ever-growing traffic congestion of the developing city.
- Mass transit also has the advantage of smaller rights of way and developing lesser amount of infrastructure required for highways and roads.
- Mass transit system is believed to be more environmentally friendly than other public transport facilities. Private vehicles emit about twice as much carbon monoxide and other volatile organic compounds than public vehicles.
- Mass Rapid Transit plays an important role in alleviating poverty or increasing the standard of living of the poor. It is the poorest people who most depend upon public transit for access to jobs and services.
- Mass transit development can both improve the usefulness and efficiency of the public transit system as well as result in increased business for commercial developments and thus serves to improve the economy of the country.
- Transit systems also have an indirect positive effect on other businesses. Mass transit systems offer considerable savings in labour, materials, and energy over private transit systems.
- Also, mass transit allows a higher amount of load to be transported to far away destinations in lesser time because of its reasonable capacity than private vehicles. Because of their larger capacity offering them to carry highly efficient engines they also help in saving fuels.

- The main idea behind mass transit is to reduce the number of vehicles on the road by providing a larger facility which carries higher number of passengers thus eliminating congestion.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT OF MRTS IN INDIAN URBAN CENTRES –

- An efficient urban transport is also critical for raising economic productivity and consequently making Indian enterprise competitive. Admittedly, Mass Rapid Transportation systems (MRTS) is one of the modes of urban mobility, its importance, especially when cities are seen as a growth node of an economic region rises significantly as inclusive growth is determined not only by the state of transport system within a city limit, but its connectivity to its periphery, rather is entire zone of influence. A clear appreciation of the urban context in India at this stage of her development has the potential to inform our decision on prioritizing investment towards MRTS, a sector which is under-invested.
- For inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth process, an efficient urban transport system including Mass Rapid Transportation System (MRTS) is vital. By and large, MRTS segment, like the entire urban transport sector remains hopelessly under-invested which is imposing a huge social cost on this country. However, such basic realizations are often lost in nitty-gritty of project details, apparent lack of finances and consequently, inability to roll out project. This is all the more ironic as India's Public-Private Partnership (PPP) regime, anchored by Department of Economic Affairs, especially its arrangement to offer up to 40 per cent of viability Grant Funding is perhaps one of the most nuanced regulatory and enabling frameworks to attract private investment in the world.
- The private sector on its part needs to show its willingness to invest. While there can be many innovative methods of raising finances, public authorities in India, especially in larger cities have a unique opportunity to generate revenue for infrastructure through land-based instruments, especially by commercially utilizing inefficiently used or vacant land in the heart of city. Value capture where the laying down of a trunk infrastructure has given rise to an enhancement of value of real estate around it is another important channel for getting finances.
- The deteriorating environmental condition in larger Indian cities is another concern which needs to be brought centre stage. While much attention has been devoted to emerging technologies like hyperloop, pods etc., it is raising the share of electric mobility exponentially which is of great relevance. While one increasingly speaks of electric mobility, however, the attention generally remains confined to either hybrid or electric car and with occasional reference to electric buses. Rail based MRTS systems, including sub-urban rails, like elsewhere in the worlds should be accorded focus in the emerging agenda of electric mobility.

Conclusion

With rapid urbanization, the pressure is mounting on the public transport system from the people living in cities and towns across the country. Mass Rapid Transport System, MRTS has emerged as one of the most effective means of mobility for the citizens in tier-1 and tier-2 cities and Metro has been a major player. Metro Projects have not only added to connectivity, it has reduced the travel time and hence enhanced the ease of living substantially in the urban areas. It has also led to creation of direct and indirect employment opportunities. It is expected that with the expansion of Metros in the cities, local and intercity travel will be easier, mobility and connectivity will be enhanced giving a fillip to local business as well.

59. Should a city like New Delhi bid for hosting the Olympics? Discuss the pros and cons.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about whether New Delhi should host Olympic. Then discuss about its pros and cons.

Introduction

India has hosted several multi-sports events, including the Asian Games (1951, 1982) and the Commonwealth Games (2010), but the Olympics has been a pipe dream. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA), from time to time, explained how the country is keen to bring the 2032 or post 2032 Olympics to India.

Body

New Delhi a candidate for hosting Olympics games –

- Hosting the Olympic Games offers manifold benefits and opportunities to a Candidate City and the host region and country. Many years of careful and precise planning around New Delhi is required to host successful Olympic Games, with all of the relevant organisations, authorities and stakeholders working together as one united team, to ensure that the Games leave a positive, long-term and sustainable legacy.
- Recently Delhi government in Budget 2021-22 proposed to host the 2048 Olympic Games to mark 100 years of India's independence. To achieve that goal it will build adequate infrastructure and create an atmosphere where sports flourishes.

Hosting the Olympics and bidding for it is a huge task that needs so much preparation let us explore the advantages of hosting Olympics –

- There are many reasons why hosting the Olympic Games is attractive to a city or country. The expectations that the event will have a positive impact, both tangible and intangible, on local communities is alive and well.
- From developing an underserved part of a New Delhi and expanding much-needed infrastructure to boosting the local economy and increasing tourism, hosting such a large-scale event can bring about great opportunities.
- Delhi government should make the most of this opportunity to tackle issues of the environment, pollution and waste management.
- Drastic strategies must be adopted to control air pollution around Delhi, environmental obliteration, augmenting water, food and sustainability. It can be a stepping stone for tackling public health and sanitation issues, eventually ensuring clean and safe facilities in New Delhi for the Olympic athletes.

- It's not just the infrastructure of New Delhi that will get a boost. The Rio Olympics took place in 4 other Brazilian cities and all of them got business too. Cities surrounding New Delhi that is Noida, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad can be natural magnet for a plethora of investors, experts and global stakeholders.
- Expect a huge boost in the medals tally if India hosts the Olympics. Sports wise vibrant states Punjab and Haryana in close proximity to New Delhi can get enhanced world class sporting culture and infrastructure. That's always the case with any home country. Brazil came out with its best ever performance of 7 golds and 19 total medals at Rio.
- There is too much focus on cricket in India. It is time we broadened the horizon. The Olympics cover a huge number of sporting events and it will give a fillip to all of them.

With serious corruption and delays in finishing off construction work in the venues along with compromising on the quality of the infrastructure, the mishandling of the CWG 2010 and COVID 2019 Pandemic led to raise questions over organising the event.

- However, cost overruns, questions over resource use and perceived corruption among other challenges have left some populations hesitant about their Delhi city's bid to host the Olympic Games.
- Bidding for the 2020 Olympics alone cost Tokyo $75 million in fees, with the hosting cost is over $26 billion - more than the $7.3 billion that was originally set aside for the Games. London paid around $16.6 billion for the 2012 event, while Beijing spent a mammoth $42 billion to host the 2008 Olympics.
- In most cases, the infrastructure and stadiums that have been built for the CWG are not used as planned. Further, certain sports like rowing have their own requirements which, when, combined, can lead to great stress on a New Delhi city's resources.
- Beyond monetary impacts, the Olympic Games can have variety of collaterals from the demolishing of historic buildings in New Delhi to the wiping out of acres of forests, or the displacement of under-privileged neighbourhoods, threats to indigenous communities, human rights infringements, etc.

Conclusion

The call of the hour, thus, is to encourage, train and systematically scout talent without political bias or corruption, which will help create world-class facilities in India. Creating top infrastructure to hone athletes and then bidding for the Olympics should be the way forward rather than bidding for it first and then preparing the sportsmen to make a mark.

60. There has been an enhanced impetus on making available potable water through various central and state level schemes. What are your views on their performance?

Approach

Question is asking you to simply give your views so write your views in a well-structured manner covering all angles.

Introduction

As per estimation of UNICEF, less than 50 per cent of the population in India has access to safely managed drinking water. Chemical contamination of water, mainly through fluoride and arsenic, is present in 1.96 million dwellings. One of the challenges is the fast rate of groundwater depletion in India, which is known as the world's highest user of this source due to the proliferation of drilling over the past few decades. Groundwater from over 30 million access points supplies 85 per cent of drinking water in rural areas and 48 per cent of water requirements in urban areas.

Body

VIEWS ON AN ENHANCED IMPETUS ON MAKING AVAILABLE POTABLE WATER THROUGH VARIOUS CENTRAL AND STATE LEVEL SCHEMES –

- In 2019, after Prime Minister Modi's re-election, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) was restructured under a new ministerial organogram, under which the MDWS's mandate became one of two pillars under a new ministry named Jal Shakti (meaning "power of water").
- With UNICEF's continued advocacy, technical assistance and engagement with Ministry of Jal Shakti, safe drinking water and sanitation remain high on the agenda of India's new government. UNICEF is currently working closely with the Ministry of Jal Shakti on the Jal Shakti Abhiyan and Jal Jeevan Abhiyaan.
- UNICEF focuses on community-managed drinking water, including water safety and security planning, in support of the NRDWP which is a centrally sponsored scheme funded on 90:10 basis by Central & State Govt.
- At the institutional level, UNICEF focuses on developing improved water quality monitoring systems and strengthening operation and maintenance of water supply infrastructures.
- One current initiative is Swajal, which seeks to enable communities to self-manage safe water sources within their habitations, and is supported by UNICEF through policy development, training of trainers, and communication campaigns.
- The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched "Swajal" as a pilot project that is designed as a demand-driven programme involving the community to provide sustainable access to safe drinking water to people in rural

areas. The Swajal programme is empowering communities to plan, design, implement and monitor single village drinking water supply schemes, and organize community ownership for operation and maintenance.

- The target population for Swajal in 117 aspirational districts across 28 states is about 0.5 million a year.

- This Programme has helped in prioritizing integrated water safety planning, behaviour change and community participation in most deprived aspirational districts, and Water Quality Monitoring (WQM). This contributed to achieving 18.6 million people gaining access to safe drinking water.

- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is the Centre's flagship programme which aims to provide piped drinking water to all rural households by 2024. Besides providing piped water supply to all households, JJM emphasises on augmenting local water sources and recharging existing ones. It also promotes water harvesting and desalination.

Conclusion

Around 2 lakh people die in India every year because of the immense water shortage and 600 million people of this country don't have access to clean drinking water. Every individual in India has the right to clean water and basic sanitation. The ultimate aim of present government's work in water, sanitation and hygiene is to ensure that all everyone fulfil this right, and that no one is left behind.

61. What are the ongoing insurance schemes of the central government? Do they provide an adequate safety net to the populace? Examine.

Approach

The student is expected to write the major insurance schemes of the central government and analyze their importance in providing the adequate insurance penetration in India for the population. The students should write the reasons of low insurance penetration and then conclude with the measures needed to improve the insurance penetration in India.

Introduction:

Insurance is the main element in the operation of national economies throughout the world today. It protects health and assets of the people and stimulates business activities to operate in a cost-effective manner. Citing this, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has released guidelines for the insurance sector i.e. Saral Jeevan Bima (SJB). Saral Jeewan Bima provides for broad contours of a standard individual term life insurance product which must be adhered by insurance companies. While India's insurance sector has been growing dynamically in recent years, its share in the global insurance market remains abysmally low

Body:

Various government schemes in the insurance sector are –

- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY): Launched on 9th May, 2015, these schemes are offered/administered through both public and private sector insurance companies, in tie up with scheduled commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative banks.
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojana: It offers a renewable one-year term life cover of Rupees Two Lakh to all account holders in the age group of 18 to 50 years, covering death due to any reason, for a premium of Rs. 330/- per annum per subscriber, to be auto debited from subscriber's bank account.
- Pradhan Mantru Swasth Beema Yojana: It offers a renewable one-year accidental death cum disability cover to all subscribing bank account holders in the age group of 18 to 70 years for a premium of Rs. 12/- per annum per subscriber to be auto debited from subscriber's bank account. It provides a cover of Rs. Two Lakh for accidental death or total permanent disability and Rs One Lakh in case of permanent partial disability. The above schemes are on self-subscription basis and involves no Government contribution.
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY): Ministry of Agriculture implements PMFBY and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS). It

provides comprehensive crop insurance cover against non-preventable natural risks at an affordable rate to farmers. It is compulsory for loanee farmers availing crop loans for notified crops in notified areas and voluntary for non-loanee farmers. Uniform maximum premium of only 2%, 1.5% and 5% of the sum insured to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops, Rabi crops and commercial/horticultural crops. The difference between premium and the rate of insurance charges payable by farmers is provided as subsidy and shared equally by the Centre and State.

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) – Ayushman Bharat: A centrally sponsored and entitlement based scheme. It covers poor and vulnerable families based on deprivation and occupational criteria as per SECC data. It provides health coverage up to Rs. 5 lakh per family, per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalization to over 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable families. It provides cashless and paperless services for the beneficiary at the point of service in any (public and private) empaneled hospitals across India. The ratio of premium under PMJAY is 60:40 between Centre and State except North Eastern States and 3 Himalayan States where the ratio is 90:10 with an upper limit for Centre. In the case of Union Territories, the Central contribution of premium is 100% for UTs without legislature, while it is 60:40 for those with legislature.

Do they provide adequate safety net in India?

There are many underlying issues which affect the insurance sector in India such as low penetration and density rates, inadequate investment in insurance products, and the dominant position and deteriorating financial health of public-sector players. Therefore, the goal of making insurance accessible to all will remain difficult to achieve, until the above mentioned issues are addressed.

- Prevalence of Insurance Gap: The insurance penetration (ratio of total premium to GDP (gross domestic product)) and density (ratio of total premium to population) stood at 3.69% and US$ 73, respectively for FY18 (fiscal year 2017-18), which is low in comparison with global levels.These low penetration and density rates reveal the uninsured nature of large sections of population in India, and the presence of an insurance gap.
- Public Sector Dominated: The insurance sector has transitioned from being an exclusive State monopoly to a competitive market, but public-sector insurers hold a greater share of the insurance market even though they are fewer in number.
- Nascent Non-life Insurance: Life insurance dominates the sector with a huge share of 74.7%, with non-life insurance accounting for the remaining 25.3%. In the non-life insurance sector, motor, health, and crop insurance segments are driving growth. India's non-life insurance penetration is below 1%.
- In addition, insurance products catering to speciality risks such as catastrophes and cyber security are at a nascent stage of development in the country.

- Rural-Urban Divide: Low insurance penetration and density rates prevail in India. However, Rural participation of insurers remains deficient, and life insurers, especially private ones, gravitate towards the urban population.
- Capital Starved Insurers: Insurers in India lack sufficient capital, and their financial health, particularly that of the public-sector insurers, is in a precarious state. Further, investment in the insurance sector got dwindled due to the crisis in banks and NBFCs (non-banking financial companies) sector.

Conclusion

Insurance companies in India will have to show long-term commitment to the rural sector as well, and will have to design products which are suitable for rural people. In this context, government insurance schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana are notable steps in right direction. There is a need for complementary thrust to spread awareness and improve financial literacy, particularly the concept of insurance, and its importance. Another area that necessitates regulatory scrutiny is that of application of technology in insurance. An example is the emergence of 'InsurTech', designed to make the claim process simpler and more comprehensible. The regulator needs to exercise vigilance on three other aspects. Demographic factors, coupled with increasing awareness and financial literacy, are likely to catalyse the growth of the sector. An enhanced regulatory regime that focuses on increasing insurance coverage is the need of the hour.

62. What is the current approach of the US in terms of its engagement in Afghanistan? How is India going to get impacted in the long run? Discuss.

Approach

The candidate needs to address the question in two parts where the first part explains the current approach of the US in terms of its engagement in Afghanistan while the second part discusses its impact on India in the long run.

Introduction

Afghanistan was elevated as a significant U.S. foreign policy concern in 2001, when the United States, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, led a military campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban government that harboured and supported it. Recently, the process for withdrawal of NATO forces is in process and the emerging dynamics will have far reaching effects on the region.

Body

- In the intervening 18 years, an elected Afghan government has replaced the Taliban, and most measures of human development have improved, although future prospects of those measures remain mixed.
- According to a June 2020 U.S. Department of Defence report, "The vital U.S. interest in Afghanistan is to prevent it from serving as a safe haven for terrorists to launch attacks against the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests, or U.S. allies."
- After months of delays, on September 12, 2020, Afghan government and Taliban representatives officially met in Doha, Qatar to begin their first direct peace negotiations, a significant moment with potentially dramatic implications for the course of the ongoing Afghan conflict.

The Joe Biden administration has proposed a new peace plan to the Afghan government and the Taliban, seeking to bring violence to a halt and form an interim government through the following means –

1. Involving other Stakeholders: US has proposed an UN-led conference of representatives of Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and the U.S. "to discuss a unified approach to support peace in Afghanistan".
2. Written Proposal to enhance Trust: US will share written proposals with the Afghan leadership and the Taliban to accelerate talks.
3. Comprehensive Ceasefire and Inclusive government: US has urged both sides to reach a consensus on Afghanistan's future constitutional and governing arrangements; find a road map to a new "inclusive government"; and agree on the terms of a "permanent and comprehensive ceasefire".

4. Negotiations in third country: US has also proposed a senior level meeting of the Afghan government and the Taliban in Turkey to discuss power sharing, reduction of violence and other specific goals.

Here, India's inclusion in the regional conference format is a positive development. Overall, impact on India in the long term can be seen from the following points –

- India would be part of the regional conference, but the UN-led forum's role and its relationship with the intra-Afghan dialogue have not been spelt out. In the 2001 Bonn conference, regional players had been part of the actual negotiations in the same venue. Similar role can be considered in this time.
- Among all the regional states, India has been the only nation that has never been comfortable with the peace process advocated by the US, as New Delhi believes that it is predicated on the notion of providing "comfort to the Pakistanis".
- Indian assets in Afghanistan have been targeted by the Haqqani group, a major Taliban faction. India has also been able to invest in Afghanistan's future partially because of the presence of U.S.-led troops and the relative stability it brought. With this stability at risk, India needs to urgently reposition its priorities.
- Further, India needs to come out of its traditional approach towards assessment of Taliban and engage with them actively, considering the ground situation and imminent withdrawal of NATO forces. This will help in denying Pakistan gain a strategic depth in the region, to be used for anti-India purposes.
- The growing tentacles of China through its belt and road initiative are also a long term threat for Indian interests in Afghanistan as China seeks to deepen its role with the help of Russia and Pakistan. Countering these efforts in the long run, would need a strategic approach to leverage India's strengths.

Way Forward –

- Broader Diplomatic Engagement: India should consider appointing a special envoy dedicated to Afghan reconciliation.
- Continued Training and Investments: India should provide more military training to Afghan security forces and invest in longer-term capacity-building programs. India should expand its development assistance.
- Working With and Through Others: India should look to broaden its engagements with Iran and Russia, explore opportunities for cooperation.

Conclusion

Addressing Afghanistan's challenges requires a comprehensive approach, involving civilian and military actors, aimed not only at providing security but also at promoting good governance, the rule of law and long-term development where regional stability is prioritised through multilateral approach.

63. What are the challenges of development in tribal pockets of India? Discuss the recent government initiatives for ensuring inclusive growth of tribal areas.

Approach

Question is asking you to discuss, it requires you to write a debate where one has to use your skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument.

Introduction

The greatest challenge that the Government of India has been facing since independence is the proper provision of social justice to the scheduled tribe people, by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and denotified tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population, from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Though the tribals are the sons of the same soil and the citizens of the same country, they born and grow as the children of the nature. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of exploitation social. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from modern and civilized way of living since so many centuries.

Body

THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN TRIBAL POCKETS OF INDIA –

*   Loss of Control over Natural Resources: Before the coming of the British, the tribals enjoyed unhindered rights of ownership and management over natural resources like land, forests, wildlife, water, soil, fish, etc. With the advent of industrialisation in India and the discovery of mineral and other resources in tribal inhabited areas, these pockets were thrown open to outsiders and state control replaced tribal control.
*   Lack of Education: According to the 1991 Census, nearly 70 per cent of the tribals are illiterates. Although it cannot be denied that education can act as the instrument for betterment of the tribals ensuring greater participation for them in the development process, still there are certain factors which inhibit the tribals from taking to education.
*   Neglect and lack of special attention of tribal and scheduled areas inspite of constitutional provision
*   Very inadequate allotment of fund in both general and special sectors to cover all aspects of development of the tribals areas.
*   Displacement and Rehabilitation: After independence, the focus of the development process was on heavy industries and the core sector. As a result, huge steel plants, power projects and large dams came up—most of them in the tribal inhabited areas. The mining activities were also accelerated in these areas. Acquisition of tribal land by the government for these projects

led to large scale displacement of the tribal population. The tribal pockets of Chhotanagpur region, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh suffered the most.

- Inadequate administrative machinery to integrate all the sec- toral programme coupled with the lack of co-ordination and integration at inter and intra departmental levels within the state as well as state vs. central sectoral levels.
- Lack of effective personnel policy of the government which finds reflected in frequent transfer of key personnel in administration, inadequate incentive to work in and for tribal areas, lack of specialized training in tribal culture as well as the inculcation in them the spirit of social service.
- Problems of Health and Nutrition: Because of economic backwardness and insecure livelihood, the tribals face health problems, such as prevalence of disease, like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and jaundice, problems associated with malnutrition like iron deficiency and anaemia, high infant mortality rates, low levels of life expectancy, etc.
- Lack of reliance on the part of the government to adopt scientific planning and ensure implementation based on research findings.
- Excessive politicization of the tribal issues and failure on the part of the tribal societies to throw in dedicated, articulate, and enlightened local leaders.
- Erosion of Identity: Increasingly, the traditional institutions and laws of tribals are coming into conflict with modern institutions which create apprehensions among the tribals about preserving their identity. Extinction of tribal dialects and languages is another cause of concern as it indicates an erosion of tribal identity in certain areas.

RECENT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR ENSURING INCLUSIVE GROWTH OF TRIBAL AREAS –

- There was considerable progress in digital mechanisms and online monitoring systems especially for scholarship schemes and expenditure of funds for tribal welfare.
- Tribal medicine emerged as another priority area along with tribal research. Expansion of eklavya model residential schools was stepped up this year while empowerment of tribals through schemes like van dhanyojana and aadi mahotsavas also remained on the forefront.
- Affirmation of tribal rights and their role in forest development was another important highlight this year.
- Ministry of tribal affairs launched the tribal health and nutrition portal swasthyaand opened national overseas portal and national tribal fellowship portal. The e-portal on tribal health and nutrition named swasthya, is a first of its kind e-portal, providing all health and nutrition related information of the tribal population of India in a single platform. Swasthya will also curate innovative practices, research briefs, case studies, and best practices collected from different parts of India to facilitate the exchange of evidence, expertise and experiences.

- The scheme of development of PVTGS covers 75 identified PVTGS in 18 states and UT of Andaman &Nicobar Islands for the activities like housing, land distribution, land development, agricultural development, animal husbandry, construction of link roads, installation of non-conventional sources of energy for lighting purpose, social security including janashreebima yojana or any other innovative activity meant for the comprehensive socio-economic development of PVTGS.
- Support to tribal research institutes (tris) and tribal festivals, research information and mass education

In the above schemes, the focus of the Ministry is to preserve and promote tribal culture and dissemination of information.

Conclusion

The majority of the tribal people are not even aware of the development schemes implemented by government agencies. Without creating awareness among the tribal people, it is difficult to achieve better results. All these deficiencies in tribal affairs make us sad. If we really want to combat the problem of poverty prevalent among the tribal communities such an unimaginative, unscientific, and unsympathetic approach to tribal problems must go.

64. Sri Lanka has immense strategic importance for India. Do you agree? Comment in the light of the evolving geopolitics in the Indian Ocean region.

Approach

Students are expected to write about the strategic importance of Srilanka for India in context of evolving geopolitics in the Indian ocean region, also it is important to mention about the challenges in the relationship between India and Srilanka and India's historical and cultural connect also needs to be briefly mentioned.

Introduction

Sri Lanka, an island nation in the Indian Ocean, is separated from India by the Palk Strait – a bare 22 miles of water. It is of prime importance for India's security and the security of the Indian Ocean. This island nation lies astride the major sea lanes of communication from Europe to East Asia and the oil tanker routes from the oil producing countries of the Gulf to China, Japan and other Pacific countries. In the military sense it is important to the United States as these same sea routes are used for transference of naval power from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf. India too has a vital strategic stake in Sri Lanka for her own security interests. An unfriendly Sri Lanka or a Sri Lanka under influence of a power unfriendly to India would strategically discomfit India. Sri Lanka is also strategically important to India in terms of her Indian Ocean strategy and in terms of networking of partners for her aims of establishing an Indian Ocean Rim Community.

Body:

Strategic importance of Srilanka for India –

- The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is more than 2,500 years old. Both countries have a legacy of intellectual, cultural, religious and linguistic interaction. In recent years, the relationship has been marked by close contacts at all levels. Trade and investment have grown and there is cooperation in the fields of development, education, culture and defence. Both countries share a broad understanding on major issues of international interest. In recent years, significant progress in implementation of developmental assistance projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and disadvantaged sections of the population in SriLanka has helped further cement the bonds of friendship between the two countries.
- Sri Lanka has by and large been friendly disposed towards India despite the complications caused by the minority Tamils of Northern Sri Lanka involved in a long insurgency and terrorism demanding an independent state of Eelam spearheaded by the LTTE. India too has in the past before the IPKF operations of the 1980s had on a number of occasion's extended military assistance to ward off security challenges to the Government of the day.

- To counter China, good relations with Sri Lanka and other countries in the Indian Ocean region are very essential. Therefore, strengthening multilateral organizations like SAARC, BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic cooperation) and IOR-ARC (Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation) is a necessity. Sri Lanka, being an important member of these organizations, can never be neglected or side-lined in the foreign policy.
- Sri Lanka has long been a priority destination for direct investment from India. Sri Lanka is one of India's largest trading partner in SAARC. India in turn is Sri Lanka's largest trade partner globally. Trade between the two countries grew particularly rapidly after the entry into force of the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement in March 2000. According to Sri Lankan Customs, bilateral trade in 2016 amounted to US $ 4.38 billion. Exports from India to Sri Lanka in 2016 were US$ 3.83 billion, while exports from Sri Lanka to India were US$ 551 million.
- Srilanka lies in the immediate vicinity of India and is strategically placed in the Indian ocean region which accounts for the most of the ocean trade thus its importance for India is a priority, Also in order to counter the Chinese spread and string of pearls manoeuvre co-operation with Srilanka gains more prominence.
- As the US is becoming more involved in South Asia, the question of its impact on India-Sri Lanka relations is one worth considering. Maldives and the US recently signed a Defence Agreement "to deepen engagement and cooperation in support of maintaining peace and security in the Indian Ocean."
- Though the US has continued to bring attention to humanitarian issues and "urge progress on reconciliation" in its conversations with members of Sri Lanka's new government, the emphasis of its equation with Sri Lanka has shifted to the Indo-Pacific, crucially 'a free and open Indo-Pacific.' In this respect they see Sri Lanka as a valuable partner, one that "will contribute to regional stability and prosperity as a hub of the Indo-Pacific region." This is reflective of the changed reality of a current and post-pandemic world.

Challenges on this front –

- Grumbling Chinese assistance to neighbourhood is because the Chinese combine investments with politics. Therefore, more important is to find alternative approaches that could combat both Chinese approaches. It is because China will not stop monetary and political interventions to dominate the global and regional order. In recent years, China has extended billions of dollars of loans to the Sri Lankan government for new infrastructure projects, which is not good for India's strategic depth in Indian Ocean Region.
- Fishermen issue-Given the proximity of the territorial waters of both countries, especially in the Palk Straits and the Gulf of Mannar, incidents of straying of fishermen are common. Indian boats have been fishing in the troubled waters for centuries and had a free run of the Bay of Bengal, Palk

Bay and the Gulf of Mannar until 1974 and 1976 when treaties were signed between the two countries to demarcate International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). However, the treaties failed to factor in the hardship of thousands of traditional fishermen who were forced to restrict themselves to a meagre area in their fishing forays.

- India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India and Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka as the mechanism to help find a permanent solution to the fishermen issue.

Conclusion

India-Sri Lanka relations will no doubt be shaped by the dynamic nature of international relations and great power rivalry. Some of the anti-China rhetoric coming from the US will die down post US elections in November 2020, though current tensions are not all cyclical. Certain structural challenges are likely to persist regardless of the US election results and these will have a long-term impact on US-China bilateral relations but importantly on the political dynamics in the Indian Ocean region. In the meantime, India should take cautious comfort in Srilanka's acknowledgment that Indian Ocean is of strategic importance and must remain a zone of peace.

65. What are the factors responsible for the prevalence of a lower sex ratio in some of India's states? What recent measures have been taken to reverse this trend? Discuss.

Approach

Question has asked you to discuss so it requires an in-depth answer that takes into account all aspects of the debate concerning the topic. You must demonstrate reasoning skills with this type of question, by using evidence to make a case for or against a research topic/argument.

Introduction

According to the 2018 report on "vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System", Arunachal Pradesh recorded the best sex ratio at birth in the country while Manipur recorded the worst sex ratio at birth. Sex ratio at birth is number of females born per thousand males. It is an important indicator to map the gender gap of a population.

Body

Factors responsible for the prevalence of a lower sex ratio in some of India's states –

- Sex discrimination leading to death, experienced by them from womb to tomb in their life cycles.
- The distorted gender makeup of the entire population does reflect an adverse child sex ratio.
- Poor reach among young people for reproductive health education and services as well as poor cultivation of gender equity norms.
- According to information from the UNPFA, reasons for female infanticide include anti-female bias, as women are often seen as subservient to men, who often employ positions of power.
- In addition, parents believe they will be better taken care of in their old age by men, as men are perceived as the principal wage earners of the family.
- Social Practices: Parents of girls are usually expected to pay a dowry, which could be a massive expense, avoided by raising males.
- Counter Effect of Rise in Income: Contrary to popular perception, in India's sex ratio at birth declined even as per capita income increased nearly 10 times over the last 65 years, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of government data.
- Various patriarchal cultural factors contribute to male preference. While for some the onus of dowry makes a girl child a burden for others, the son preference may be related to the tradition of sons performing funeral rites. Sons carry on the family lineage, while daughters, after marriage, are understood to move away to become a member of another family. With

most women shifting out to live with the husband's house, old age care of the parents is usually provided by the son.

What recent measures have been taken to reverse this trend?

- Female education and economic prosperity need to be worked on to help improve the ratio.
- Rollout campaigns on sensitisation towards women and children, making women safety cells, ensuring the safety of women on public transport systems, making cyber-crime cells are some other initiatives that need to be taken.
- In view of the complexity of son preference resulting in gender-biased sex selection, government actions need to be supplemented by improving women's status in the society.
- Young people involvement in reducing the effect of population momentum and accelerate progress towards reaching a more normal sex-ratio at birth is important.
- Initiatives like the government's beti bachao beti padhao Campaign has achieved remarkable success in bringing behavioural change in the society. Such initiatives should be encouraged more.

Conclusion

India has created several impressive goals to reduce its population growth rates, India and the rest of the world has a long way to go to achieve meaningful population policy which are not only based on quantitative control but qualitative control as well. There is an urgent need to reach young people both for reproductive health education and services as well as to cultivate gender equity norms. This could reduce the effect of population momentum and accelerate progress towards reaching a more normal sex-ratio at birth. India's population future depends on it.

66. What are the issues with the trade and regulation of bitcoins in India? Do you agree with the proposal of criminalizing bitcoin trade?

Approach

Question is very straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about the issues with the trade and regulation of bitcoins in India, also in the second part of the question students need to mention about the proposal of criminalising the bitcoin trade.

Introduction

Bitcoin is a digital currency that was created in January 2009. It follows the ideas set out in a whitepaper by the mysterious and pseudonymous Satoshi Nakamoto.The identity of the person or persons who created the technology is still a mystery. Bitcoin offers the promise of lower transaction fees than traditional online payment mechanisms and, unlike government-issued currencies, it is operated by a decentralized authority. Bitcoin is a type of cryptocurrency. There are no physical bitcoins, only balances kept on a public ledger that everyone has transparent access to. All bitcoin transactions are verified by a massive amount of computing power. Bitcoins are not issued or backed by any banks or governments, nor are individual bitcoins valuable as a commodity. Despite it not being legal tender, Bitcoin is very popular and has triggered the launch of hundreds of other cryptocurrencies, collectively referred to as altcoins.

Body

Issues with trade –

- Section 26 of the RBI Act states that, 'every banknote shall be legal tender at any place in India in payment or on account for the amount expressed therein, and shall be guaranteed by the Central Government'. The virtual currency is not guaranteed by the Central Government, so, in order for any virtual currency to be declared legal tender, it will have to be expressly guaranteed by the Central Government. In that case, parties are legally bound to accept it as a mode of payment. So, privately issued cryptocurrencies would not be safe.
- Security Issue: Instances like Mt Gox bankruptcy highlight some of the key risks associated with crypto exchanges pertaining to the safety and security of cryptocurrencies. Crypto-currencies are prone to cyber frauds, hacking and other network-related issues.
- Lack of Investor Protection: Due to the anonymous nature of crypto-currency transactions, there is a lack of investor/consumer protection in the form of recourse and quick and orderly access to their own funds/assets.
- Bitcoin's value, astronomical even now at about $8,300 but much below January 2018's stratospheric levels, is based on demand for a fixed supply of

Bitcoins in the future it cannot exceed 21 million in number, of which 18 million has already been mined. Cryptos are feared not just for their sheer speculative propensities, but also for their capacity to undermine sovereign currencies (the latter is an exaggerated apprehension).

Issues with regulation –

- Virtual currency is being traded anonymously over the Internet and used for a host of anti-national and illegal activities, from terror funding to illicit trade of arms and drugs and so on.
- The online use of this currency, was without any border restrictions or geographical constraints, resulting in danger to the integrity and sovereignty of the nation.
- However, it does not make sense to go overboard and criminalise merely adventurous crypto speculators. There are no official or other data available that point towards misuse of cryptocurrencies for illegal ends.
- Cryptocurrencies are much more prone to volatility. Cryptocurrencies are digital asset, not usually backed by a physical commodity or currency. This means that their value is completely dependent on faith. Their price follows the laws of supply and demand. In the absence of regulatory oversight, market manipulation can occur, which introduces volatility. This, in turn, discourages institutional investment in the market. Thus, a cryptocurrency may be a worth of a fortune today in the market and be utterly worthless tomorrow.

Is criminalising bitcoin trade the only option –

- Blockchains and cryptocurrencies have the potential to radically transform every industry that relies on contracts and transactions. It can facilitate irrefutable proof of ownership of digital art, or facilitate smart contracts that execute clauses automatically when certain conditions are met. It can improve accounting, banking, insurance, and nearly every other sector.
- Decentralised finance based on the blockchain is revolutionising how the financial industry works. A new business order, with digital currencies and blockchain technologies as its cornerstones, is emerging. Criminalising or even the use of such language will put off some of the brightest minds from India and leave us behind.
- Such a blanket prohibition would be disastrous on multiple levels. For one thing, enforcing the law would be even more difficult than under the License Raj. Raids once aimed at seizing dollars and gold bars would face the challenge of locating a password or seed phrase holding millions in Bitcoin. Nor can the government seize or even access the network of computers scattered across the world mining cryptocurrency and maintaining blockchain ledgers.
- To enforce a ban, authorities would have to develop an intrusive surveillance system that could track all digital and internet activity in the country.

Thankfully, India does not have the state capacity to pull that off. More likely, its efforts will only drive the cryptocurrency market underground.

- The ban would prevent Indians from capitalizing on crypto-asset appreciation, which blockchain evangelist Balaji Srinivasan has called a "trillion-dollar mistake." India receives the highest inflow of global remittances and using blockchain networks could save Indians billions in transfer fees. Meanwhile, elite Indians with options will flee the country, taking their wealth and innovations with them.

Conclusion

Instead of criminalizing digital currencies, the government should take a hard look at India's restrictions on financial transactions and bring them in line with the changing world. Liberalization in 1991 made India a world leader in IT. Opening up even further could place Indians where they belong — at the frontier of fintech innovation, not under suspicion.

67. How is unemployment measured in India? Discuss. What is the recent trend of unemployment in India's informal sector? Examine.

Approach

The candidate needs to address the question in two parts where the first part needs to discuss how employment is measured in India while in the second part should examine the recent trend of unemployment in India's informal sector.

Introduction

Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. Unemployment is often used as a measure of the health of the economy. The most frequent measure of unemployment is the unemployment rate, which is the number of unemployed people divided by the number of people in the labour force.

Body

The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), since its inception in 1950, does the measurement of unemployment in India. Its three different estimates include –

1. Usual status approach with a reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey.
2. Current weekly status approach with a reference period of seven days preceding the date of survey.
3. Current daily status approach with each day of the seven days preceding date of survey as the reference period.

*   The NSSO defines following three broad Activity Status i) Working (engaged in an economic activity) i.e. 'Employed' ii) Seeking or available for work i.e. 'Unemployed' iii) Neither seeking nor available for work.
*   All those individuals having a broad activity status as i) or ii) above are classified as being in the Labour Force and those having activity status iii) are classified as outside the Labour Force. Thus labour force constitutes of both employed and unemployed.
*   In other words, Labour force (also called work force) is the total number of people employed or seeking employment in a country or region. One is classified as 'not in labour force', if he or she was engaged in relatively longer period in any one of the non-gainful activities. Unemployment rate is the percent of the labour force that is without work.

Despite now being the fastest growing large economy in the world, India is still suffering from the damaging effects of policy-induced informality in the workforce from the initial decades after independence.

- The definition and percentage of unorganised labour in the informal sector are blurry and confusing. The Economic Survey of 2018-19 puts it at almost 93%" of the total workforce as "informal". But NITI Aayog's Strategy for New India at 75 puts it at approximately 85% of all workers.
- It has been realised that lack of reliable statistics on the size, distribution and economic contribution of the sector has been a major constraint in providing a realistic understanding of the significance of the informal sector to the Indian economy, leading to its neglect in development planning.
- There has been a shift in the pattern of employment in recent years with the process of casualization being stalled and self-employment going up both in rural and urban areas for men as well as women.
- Indicating a shift towards rise in self-employment over the last eight years in rural areas, the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18 shows that the percentage of self-employed in rural India went up across both male and female as against that seen in 2009-10.
- While the introduction of the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 and The Code on Social Security, 2019 are conducive to the conservation of the rights of unorganized labourers, they have not been very effective. The constant influx of menial migrant labourers also makes the nation susceptible to the expropriation of its workers' surplus value.
- The Indian agricultural sector (largest employer of the informal sector) serves as an example of an industry which is tainted by disguised unemployment due to an oversupply of labourers; it employed 55% of the nation's labour force in 2017 but contributed a meagre 16% to the GDP.
- COVID-19 induced pandemic has led to an alarming expansion of informal sector, in recent times, has adversely affected employment and income security for the larger majority of the workforce, but governmental initiatives have helped in improving the scale of social welfare / security programme.
- The International Labour Organization (ILO 2020) report has indicated that as a result of COVID-19, an estimated 400 million informal sector workers are at risk of abject poverty in India. Women are likely to bear the brunt of job losses the most because much of their work is invisible, and they are more likely to work in informal work arrangements.

Conclusion

At present, the Indian economy is faced with a conundrum of simultaneously securing the future of an ever-increasing labour-force and sustaining high levels of economic growth through the adoption of capital-intensive technology in production. Inaction on these two fronts can have calamitous ramifications; without upskilling the working population and imparting necessary proficiency to young individuals, economic inequality will only rise and the working population with marginal financial stature may submerge into indigence. All these factors clearly necessitate governmental actions to mitigate the situation.

68. What are your views on the draft scrapping policy for vehicles? What are its intended benefits? Discuss.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to give his/her views with regards to the draft scrapping policy for vehicles in the first part of the answer while discussing its intended benefits in the second part.

Introduction

Recently, the much-awaited draft policy on vehicle scrappage was released, which outlined the criteria for defining end-of-life vehicles and scrapping them. This is an important step forward towards building infrastructure for organised and scientific scrapping of old vehicles.

Body

- A scrappage policy is a government-funded programme to promote the replacement of old vehicles with modern ones and is expected to help in the reduction of pollution by scrapping older vehicles as well as create jobs in the auto sector.
- It also refers to the provision of financial incentives to the owners of vehicles to get them to scrap outdated models and replace them with newer vehicles.
- One of the provisions of the vehicle scrappage policy is to mandate fitness tests for commercial vehicles after 15 years. In case of failure to pass the fitness tests, the policy proposes de-registering commercial vehicles, which would then make it illegal to use these vehicles in the country.
- The policy also proposes that all vehicles used by the Central government, state governments, municipal corporations, panchayats, state transport undertakings, public sector undertakings, and autonomous bodies with the union and state governments be also de-registered and scrapped after 15 years from their date of registration.
- But the draft policy also misses an opportunity of designing an effective stimulus programme for green recovery in a post pandemic economy for the sector to achieve air quality benefits.
- Further, there is no stated commitment in the policy towards fiscal stimulus for renewal of ageing vehicles with BS-VI norms or linking with the electrification of vehicles. It places the onus of incentivising vehicle scrapping on state governments, which are already fiscally strained.
- According to a study by International Council on Clean Transportation, in Germany, replacing old cars with newer ones powered with internal combustion engine did not provide much effective emissions gains as replacing them with electric vehicles.
- Therefore, limiting the numbers of personal vehicles that can qualify for incentives and linking their voluntary replacement with electric vehicles can

contribute towards accelerating the target of 30-40 per cent electrification by 2030.

But overall, the draft scrapping policy for vehicles has many intended benefits, some of which are discussed below –

1. The policy is aimed at taking off the roads old, fuel-guzzling vehicles whose roadworthiness may be in doubt and replacing them with new ones in a potential boost to automobile sales and their manufacturers.
2. The post-Budget observations indicated that the broad outline of the policy expects to stimulate investment of Rs10,000 crore and create 50,000 jobs.
3. The policy will help in encouraging fuel-efficient, environment-friendly vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular pollution and the oil import bill as vehicles would undergo fitness tests in automated centres after 20 years in the case of personal vehicles, and after 15 in the case of commercial vehicles.
4. With India becoming an automobile hub, the industry turnover is expected to more than double in the years to come. The policy, it is being claimed, will boost new technologies with better mileage and promote green vehicles, strong hybrids, electric vehicles, and those running on alternative fuels like CNG/ethanol, etc.
5. It is estimated that one crore vehicles will be scrapped for harvested material like steel, plastic, rubber and aluminium used in the manufacturing of automobile parts, thereby reducing their cost by 30 to 40 per cent.
6. The other tangible benefits from the policy are scientific disposal and recovery of waste. Recycle and reuse can contribute towards import substitution and improve India's balance of payments.

Way Forward –

More effective leveraging of the policy is possible if the Government allows GST cuts for replacement vehicles including electric ones, and considers direct incentives for targeted fleet renewal of most polluting old trucks and buses based on BS6 standards.

Conclusion

Clearly, this first ever formal scrappage policy in India is urgently needed to help build infrastructure for safe disposal and material recovery to minimise environmental hazards. But India would be adopting scrappage policy during these unprecedented pandemic times, so it is necessary to leverage this targeted fleet renewal with well-designed central support for post-pandemic green deal.

69. Has there been a decline in the overall integrity and values of bureaucracy in India? Critically comment.

Approach

The candidate needs to comment upon whether there has been a decline in the overall integrity and values of bureaucracy in India and also give some counter arguments to the same for showcasing a balanced perspective.

Introduction

Bureaucrats need to maintain neutrality and impartiality in their working to ensure the triumph of democracy where upholding the values of bureaucracy becomes important to face the number of serious challenges from diminishing human capital in Indian bureaucracy.

Body

- Public administration has become a key agency for development in most of the developing countries where Bureaucracy contributes immensely to development by serving as adviser, inventor, and decision-maker.
- But over a period of time, Indian bureaucracy seems to be in decline in terms of overall integrity and values, which can be detrimental to the democratic institutions as well as constitutional ethos of the administration in India.
- Over the years, whatever virtues the civil servants possessed – integrity, political neutrality, courage and high morale – are showing signs of decay. Some civil servants are deeply involved in partisan politics. For example, Supreme Court even called CBI as caged parrot which speaks for its masters.
- Further, there has been a deviation from bureaucrat's professional ethics due to multiple factors like personal ambitions, security of tenure, lack of accountability, political interference, greed, etc. For example, recent incident involving API Sachin Waze in terror case.
- Here, political interference can be considered one of the major factors for the decline where transfers have been used as instruments of reward and punishment by politicians, as tools for controlling and taming the bureaucracy.
- Specialisation is an important facet of bureaucracy in the Weberian scheme, but in the Indian context the 'generalist' IAS officers are the ultimate mavens in all administration branches, which contributes to professional inadequacies leading to decline in values for compromise.
- Also, unprecedented security of tenure for Indian bureaucrats has led to a work culture where productivity and accountability are side-lined and lethargic work culture is imbibed which eventually is leading to decline in values.

At the same time, it is important to note that the above discussion is not an overall trend but refers to a section of civil servants, whereas the major section of bureaucratic structure sees mostly honest and upright officers with proper values and integrity.

- These civil servants are the "doers". For example, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan led by the redoubtable Parameswaran Iyer is creating an impact. Fortunately, it is becoming visible as well.
- Further, the thrust on efficiency and integrity in the Indian Railways by its chairman Ashwani Lohani, is also yielding results. One can witness the impact of the changes he has brought about in the functioning of the Railways.
- The team of Indu Bhushan and Dinesh Arora, engaged in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana Abhiyan as part of Ayushman Bharat, provides another example of honest and efficient working.
- COVID-19 Pandemic also saw the recognition of bureaucrats work and their sacrifices as the frontline workers. For example, in Odisha, V. K. Pandian, private secretary to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, led Odisha to become the first state to go for a 40 per cent lockdown following an analysis of the geographical spread of people who came from abroad in March.
- These are honest and efficient bureaucrats committed to the cause for which they are paid for from the public exchequer. They are performing their tasks as professionals. Their crusading spirit is directed towards the tasks assigned to them.
- However, unfortunately, there are an equal numbers of bureaucrats who stop at just being honest, which also becomes an issue as professionalism is replaced with virtue signalling instead of completing the task at hand.

Way Forward –

- Implementing and popularising the All India Service (Conduct) Rules, 1968 for All-India Service officers of IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service in its true sense.
- Coming up with more measures like Mission Karmayogi, in accordance with 2nd ARC's recommendations for improving the value system as well as work culture of bureaucrats.
- A government servant's promotion, career advancement and continuance in service should be linked to his actual performance on the job and the dead wood should be weeded out where the promotions should be merit based.
- Officers need to be motivated and empowered by giving them more responsibility and decision-making authority.

Conclusion

Bureaucrats should consider their role as public servants and maintain high standards of ethics as well as professionalism to serve the people in the true sense for striving towards achieving the ideals of 'New India'.

70. Discuss the contributions of contemporary Indian scientists in the field of space technology.

Approach

The candidate needs to discuss the contributions of contemporary Indian scientists in the field of space technology in the answer along with proper examples and substantiations.

Introduction

India owes a lot of its space success to the existing breed of excellent space scientists that are relentlessly pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the field of space technology which have brought laurels to the Indian space technology arena as well as led to establishment of India as one of the powerhouses of space exploration and technology.

Body

In this regard, the contributions of contemporary Indian scientists in the field of space technology can be seen from the following points –

- Jayant Vishnu Narlikar is an Indian astrophysicist. Narlikar is a proponent of steady state cosmology. He developed with Sir Fred Hoyle the conformal gravity theory, commonly known as Hoyle–Narlikar theory. It synthesises Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Mach's Principle. It proposes that the inertial mass of a particle is a function of the masses of all other particles, multiplied by a coupling constant, which is a function of cosmic epoch. In cosmologies based on this theory, the gravitational constant G decreases strongly with time.
- Mars Orbiter Mission: India's first inter planetary mission, the Mars Orbiter Spacecraft was successfully launched on November 5, 2013 on-board PSLV-C25. Its success made India one of the four nations in the world to send space mission to Planet Mars. Mars Orbiter Mission is mainly intended to establish the Indian technological capability to reach Martian orbit and to explore Mars surface features, morphology, mineralogy and Martian atmosphere by indigenous scientific instruments.
- Thanu Padmanabhan is an Indian theoretical physicist and cosmologist whose research spans a wide variety of topics in Gravitation, Structure formation in the universe and Quantum Gravity. He has published more than 260 papers and reviews in international journals and ten books in these areas. Many of his contributions, especially those related to the analysis and modelling of dark energy in the universe and the interpretation of gravity as an emergent phenomenon, have made significant impact in the field.
- Remote Sensing and National Natural Resource Management System: The Indian Remote Sensing Satellites (IRS) System, with currently 11 satellites in

orbit, is one of the largest constellations of remote sensing satellites in operation in the world today. It provides inputs for management of natural resources and various developmental projects across the country using space based imagery. During the last decade, 13 remote sensing satellites have been launched and operationalized.

- Ritu Karidhal has been dubbed as the 'Rocket Woman of India', she was the Mission Director of the Chandrayaan-2 mission, and was feted for role in helming one of India's most ambitious lunar projects. She was responsible for detailing and the execution of the craft's onward autonomy system that independently operated the satellite's functions in space and responded appropriately to malfunctions.

- The successful flight testing of indigenous cryogenic stage on-board GSLV-D5 Flight on January 5, 2014. Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) is capable of placing 2 Tonne class communication satellite into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) and India is one among six countries in the world to demonstrate such launch capability to GTO with the use of complex cryogenic technology. It clearly demonstrated the capability of Indian scientists in complex space technologies.

- Byrana Nagappa Suresh is an Indian aerospace scientist. He served as the Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram during the period 2003–2007. He is known for his contribution to development of Indian launch vehicles and Space Capsule Recovery Experiments (SRE). Dr. Suresh also served as the founding Director of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST), Thiruvananthapuram.

- Kamakshi Sivaramakrishnan is part of the team that developed a technology, which is now on-board NASA's New Horizon mission, which is probing Pluto. It is NASA's farthest space mission. She is responsible for building the algorithm and the chip that is responsible for bringing information from Pluto, whose existence as a planet was being questioned. The chip on board the spacecraft collects signals and sends them back to the space station which is three billion miles away.

Conclusion

Many people have contributed towards the expansion of scientific contemplation in modern India, especially in space technology, where contemporary Indians are raising the bar continuously towards rapid advancements in space technology as well as growth of a space based technology ecosystem in India which would help in overall scientific growth of the nation.

71. Examine the recent achievements of Indian scientists in building indigenous weapon systems.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about Indian indigenous weapon system and then examine the recent achievements of Indian scientists in building the indigenous weapon system.

Introduction

Over dependence on the Soviet Union, brought about a change in India's approach to defence industrialisation from licence-based production to production based on indigenous design. From the mid-1980s, the government pumped resources into R&D to enable the DRDO to undertake high profile projects.

Body

Indigenisation of Defence and weapon system –

- Indigenisation is the capability of developing and producing any defence equipment within the country for the dual purpose of achieving self-reliance and reducing the burden of imports. India's defence R & D and industry mainly government and public sector so far have designed and developed a number of indigenous platforms and weapons systems over the years.

Recent achievements by Indian scientists in building indigenous weapon system –

- In 2016, DRDO successfully tested its first indigenously developed heavy duty drone, Rustom 2, an unmanned armed combat vehicle developed on the lines of the US's Predator drone.
- Third generation 'fire-and-forget' anti-tank missile with a range of 4-8km. HELINA (Helicopter Launched NAG) is the air-to-surface version of the NAG integrated into Dhruv Helicopters. DRDO developed Muntra, India's first unmanned tank for detecting mines and for operation in areas where there is a nuclear radiation or biological/chemical weapon risk.
- DRDO co-developed and operationalised India's first nuclear ballistic missile submarine, INS Arihant, with the development of which, India completed its nuclear triad and became capable of firing nuclear weapons from land, air and sea.
- DRDO announced its development of an electronic intelligence satellite, EMISAT which would be launched by ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation). Weighing about 436 kg, EMISAT is based on ISROs Indian Mini Satellite-2 (IMS-2) bus platform and is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement.

- DRDO developed India's first anti-satellite system (ASAT) that made India the fourth nation in the world to possess this capability. India tested its first ASAT which is capable of destroying satellites in the low earth orbit.
- After several years of flight testing and four phases of dedicated testing, the LCA (Navy) Flight Test Team successfully executed a textbook arrested landing at the SBTF.

The Self-Reliance Index (SRI) which may be defined as the ratio of indigenous content of defence procurements to the total expenditure on defence procurements in a financial year is at an abysmal 0.3. Let us analyse the challenges in indigenisation of weapon system –

- Infrastructural deficit increases India's logistics costs thus reducing the country's cost competitiveness and efficiency.
- Lack of an institutional capacity and capability to take different policies aimed at indigenisation of defence to its logical conclusion.
- Land acquisition issues restrict entry of new players in the defence manufacturing and production.
- In a 2011 report to the Parliament, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) highlighted the 90% import dependency of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) for 'raw materials and bought out items' for the production of indigenous.
- CAG report also revealed that not all technologies developed by DRDO were suitable for use by the armed forces. The three services have rejected 70 per cent of the products developed at the ARDE Pune, because the products did not meet their standard and requirement.

Way forward –

- Preference to 'Buy (Indian)', 'Buy & Make (Indian)' & 'Make' categories of acquisition over 'Buy (Global)' category, thereby giving preference to Indian industry in procurement.
- DRDO former chief V.K. Saraswat has called for the setting up of a Defence Technology Commission as well as a bigger role for DRDO in picking production partners for products developed by the agency.
- Committee chaired by P. Rama Rao suggested DRDO should be restructured in a leaner organisation also recommended for setting up a commercial arm of the organisation.

Conclusion

Indigenisation in defence is critical to national security also. It keeps intact the technological expertise and encourages spin-off technologies and innovation that often stem from it. Strategic Capability increases with self-sufficient and self-reliant defence industry also it will place India among the top global powers.

72. What have been India's recent achievements on the space technology front? Discuss.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to discuss India's recent achievement's in the field of space technology.

Introduction

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is one of the largest and most successful space agencies in the world. Since its inception back in 1969, the Indian space agency has achieved a number of milestones, from successfully launching Chandrayaan-2 to testing a critical technology for human spaceflight.

Body

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has come a long way since its formation from launching small rockets of just 30-70 kg payloads to carrying 4,000 kg payloads to the outer space. In this regard, some of India's recent achievements on space technology front include –

Launch Vehicles –

- Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV): PSLV upper stage (PS4) restart capability has also been demonstrated which enables PSLV to inject multiple satellites in different orbits in same mission thereby making PSLV more versatile launcher.
- GSLV-Mark III: The first developmental flight was successfully launched, in which a 3136 kg communication satellite (GSAT19) was injected into the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. GSAT-19 is the heaviest satellite launched with Indian launch vehicle.
- Technology demonstration: The first experimental mission of ISRO's Scramjet engine towards the realization of an Air Breathing Propulsion System, was successfully conducted. With this test, India became the fourth country to demonstrate the flight-testing of a Scramjet engine.
- Towards developing essential technologies for a fully reusable launch vehicle to enable low cost access to space, ISRO successfully flight tested India's first winged body Reusable Launch Vehicle - Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD) demonstrating Autonomous navigation, guidance and control & re-entry mission management.

Communication, Navigation and Earth Observation Satellites –

- The Indian space agency, scripted history by successfully launching RISAT-2B, a super surveillance satellite, from the Satish Dhawan Space Center. The

radar imaging satellite can take high-resolution images even in cloudy conditions. Further, South Asia Satellite was realized with the objective of providing communication services over South Asian countries.

- Recently, ISRO's PSLV-C43 lifted off with India's Hyper-Spectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS), the country's best high-resolution satellite ever, which can study the earth's surface in visible, near-infrared, and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Seven more satellites of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) constellation were successfully launched. The constellation is named as 'NavIC', and was dedicated to the nation by the PM.
- Recently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) declared that it has successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metres, for the first time in the country.
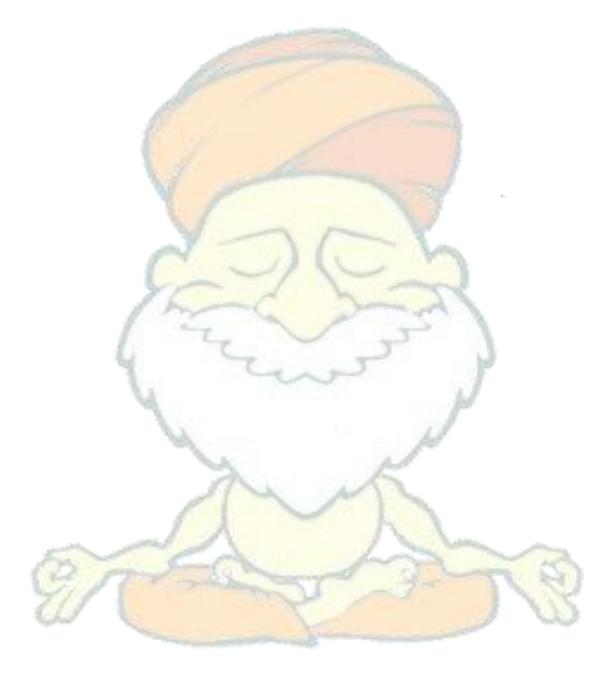
Space Science Missions –

- ASTROSAT: India's first multi wavelength observatory capable of simultaneously viewing the Universe in the visible, Ultra-Violet and X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum, with its 5 payloads, was successfully launched into its planned orbit.
- Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM): India's first inter-planetary mission MOM, far outliving its originally planned life, completed three years in its orbit, in September 2017. The Mars Colour Camera has, so far, produced around 940 images.
- Chandrayaan 1: It changed the course of India's space exploration. It was launched in October 2008 and was the first lunar probe under the Chandrayaan program. The mission had a lunar impactor and orbiter. It was launched to collect scientific information about the moon's mineralogy, geology and topography.

Human Space Flight –

- ISRO successfully carried flight test of the indigenous Crew Escape System, a crucial technology for launching astronauts into space. The Crew Escape System is an emergency escape measure that is designed to quickly pull the crew module and the astronauts away from the launch vehicle, to a safe distance, in case of a malfunction in the initial launch stage.
- Further, Isro's Vyommitra will ride to space in the first test flight of the human space mission, Gaganyaan. She is being called a half-humanoid since she will only have a head, two hands and will not have lower limbs. She will simulate human functions before real astronauts take off. She can detect and warn if environmental changes within the cabin get uncomfortable to astronauts and change the air condition.

Conclusion

The spirit of the nation's scientific community and inventor stayed undeterred even as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to create havoc throughout the last year, which is embodiment of the fact that Indian space research and technology field is robust and ready to take the nation to further heights.

73. What are the key challenges for tapping solar energy in India? What measures have been taken to address those? Examine.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about the key challenges for tapping the solar energy in India and then suggest some measures to tackle the challenges.

Introduction

Debate of global warming and climate change is compelling the world to move from fossil based energy towards clean and green energy. India lying in tropical belt has an advantage of receiving peak solar radiation for 300 days. With its pollution free nature, virtually inexhaustible supply and global distribution, solar energy is very attractive energy resource.

Body

Solar energy in India –

- India's current installed solar power capacity, according to Central electricity authority, is 26025.97 MW which is 34% of total renewable energy sources. India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC's) commitment include 100 GW of solar power out of 175 GW renewable energy by 2022.

Challenges for tapping solar energy –

- India's solar capacity is largely based on imported items. We are heavily dependent on China for PV cells, modules, and other associated products. The low-priced Chinese imports do not let Indian manufacturing to flourish. The dumping of low-cost equipment is a threat to the profitability of local manufacturers.
- Per capita land availability is a scarce resource in India. Dedication of land area for exclusive installation of solar cells have to compete with other necessities that require land. It is a space-intensive method of energy production. The more energy production you require, the more space you will need.
- The initial installation costs are very high as of now so they are not affordable to a large section of the population. The battery requirements, inverter, wiring, and installation takes up a large amount of cost.
- Solar energy storage is expensive and the storage technology is still evolving and the current storage scenario is costly.
- There is also an issue of toxic materials and hazardous products used during the PVs production that can indirectly affect the environment though in smaller amounts.

- Though India had added the DCR in its bid to improve the local manufacturing ecosystem, the WTO litigation and unsuccessful attempt to protect it is making the flowering of local manufacturing more difficult.
- Though the skilling of the workforce is included in the policy support measure for the solar sector, the skilling requirement for the sector is very high and India is not keeping up the pace.
- The COVID-19 has affected all the sectors of the economy which includes solar energy sectors too. The ongoing solar projects have been halted and the developers are concerned about the cost escalations due to domestic lockdown and production cuts in China.
- The impact of COVID-19 on the supply chain has also been a cause for the rising demand for cancellation of Power purchase agreements apart from the fact that there are no new takers for new Power supply agreements and auctions.

Measure to tackle the challenges –

- The solar-wind hybrid energy model is an emerging model that works on deficiencies of both the sectors and provides a more reliable source of power generation. Such innovative models can provide more cost-effective investment opportunities.
- The architecture more suitable for most of India would be a highly distributed, individual rooftop power generation systems, all connected via a local grid.
- There is a need to improve investment in the solar supply chain within India. As the conventional finance mechanisms are reeling under pressure, measures like green bonds, solar bonds, UNFCCC finance mechanisms can be tried.
- There should be fair tariff policies so that investments are not rendered profitless. The optimisation of the price-profit duo is of critical importance for India with a huge population in lower middle income.
- The R&D and skilling of the manpower aspect must be given the most thrust to. If we are to have a robust domestic manufacturing, local R&D and skills are most important.
- What India needs today is a dedicated solar manufacturing strategy that addresses all the aspects of solar manufacturing ranging from land, tariff, import to skilling, and behavioural aspects.

Conclusion

Growth of solar sector though halted due to pandemic, the pandemic itself is a critical opportunity for India to plan is own green deal on the lines of the European Union. Solar energy sector is a solution to most of our pressing issues such as equitable and sustainable development, social sector, employment generation, etc. Also it forms an important component of the quest for Atmanirbhar Bharat.

74. What are the parameters to measure innovation? What has been India's recent performance in innovation? Discuss.

Approach

Candidate is expected to define what innovation is and why it is necessary. With the help innovation index and its parameters, future of India's innovation can be stated.

Introduction

Innovation is the process of creating value by applying novel solutions to meaningful problems. Innovation is a process. It's not the result itself per se, but the path to get there. We know it's possible to innovate unsuccessfully—there's plenty of evidence that innovations often fail. What's key is that seeking to create value by applying a novel solution to a meaningful problem.

Body

What are the innovation metrics?

- Capabilities- Capabilities refer to the abilities, practical skills, unique insights and know-how of the people. In addition, it also covers the tacit knowledge, and other information capital, as well as financial capital needed to create innovation.
- Structures- By structures, we refer to the organizational structure, processes, resources and infrastructure of the organization that enable the effective use of the aforementioned capabilities. Structure metrics should support resource allocation, efficient innovation management and idea-to-launch process, as well as speed of testing of new ideas.
- Culture- Culture enables the organization to acquire the capabilities related to people. Although it might be relatively difficult to effectively measure direct impacts on culture, the right type of culture may have a tremendous effect on the innovativeness of an organization. An innovative company culture supports the process and need for always getting better, learning and experimenting at a fast speed, as well as balancing between freedom and responsibility.
- Leadership & Strategy metrics- Strategy is ultimately about making a deliberate choice between a number of feasible options to have the best chance of "winning". It is the high-level plan for the organization to achieve its goals and long-term success, whereas leadership is needed on the way there.

Innovation index and India's performance –

- Global Innovation Index-It provides detailed metrics about the innovation performance of 131 countries and economies around the world. Its 80

indicators explore a broad vision of innovation, including political environment, education, and infrastructure and business sophistication. It is published annually by Cornell University, INSEAD and the WIPO.

- Global Innovation Index 2020 was released by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). India is at the 48th position in the list of top 50 innovative countries. India occupied the 52nd position in 2019 rankings.
- Switzerland, Sweden, the USA, the UK and Netherlands are the top five countries. With a group of Asian economies advancing up the rankings, the index indicates that "a gradual eastward shift in the locus of innovation" is underway.
- In Asian economies, China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam have made the most progress on the index in recent years, with all four now among the top 50.
- India is one of the leading innovation achievers in the central and southern Asian region, as it has shown a consistent improvement in its innovation ranking for the last 5 years. China, which is the only middle-income economy among the top 30, now holds the 14th position.

India innovation index –

- Developed by NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Ayog with the Institute for Competitiveness.
- The index has been developed on the lines of the Global Innovation Index (GII), to ameliorate the innovation ecosystem of Indian states and Union Territories (UTs) and to design policies to drive innovation across regions.
- The index goes beyond traditional approaches by considering the best parameters in measuring innovation such as patents per million of population, publication in scientific journals, and percentage of GDP spending on research.
- India Innovation Index Report 2020 was released by NITI Aayog in which Karnataka retained its top position in the major States category.
- The Index is calculated as the average of the scores of its two dimensions – Enablers and Performance. The Enablers are the factors that underpin innovative capacities, grouped in five pillars: (1) Human Capital, (2) Investment, (3) Knowledge Workers, (4) Business Environment, and (5) Safety and Legal Environment. The Performance dimension captures benefits that a nation derives from the inputs, divided in two pillars: (6) Knowledge Output and (7) Knowledge Diffusion.

Conclusion

India has a unique opportunity among its myriad challenges to become the innovation leader in the world. Cluster-based innovation should be leveraged upon as the focal point of competitiveness. The index is a great beginning to improve the environment of innovation in the country as it focuses on both the input and output components of the idea.

75. What is the economic and geostrategic significance of central Asia for India? Discuss the recent efforts to increase the outreach to central Asia.

Approach

Since question asking you to discuss so it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion. In simple terms an examiner expects one to discuss various perspectives and present a logical argument.

Introduction

The prospects of India-Central Asian relations is not a new one. Several facets of cultures, civilizations, and intellectual histories of the two regions suggest that they evolved not in isolation, but through reciprocal cultural enrichment. In modern times, however, the importance of Central Asia to India is not merely civilizational and historical, but also geostrategic and economic.

Body

Economic and geostrategic significance of central Asia for India –

- The geo-strategic location of the Central Asian Republics (CAR) has made this region extremely fundamental which has attracted the attention of various countries, including India.
- New energy sources from Central Asia will play an important role in the Indian energy strategy in the coming years. Peace and stability in CARs and Afghanistan seem to be the most significant factor for India's security.
- Central Asia is significant for India as it is well versed with energy resources as it has an abundance of oil and gas deposits. It contains vast hydrocarbon fields both on-shore and off-shore in the Caspian Sea which homes around 4 percent of the world's natural gas reserves and approximately 3 percent of oil reserves.
- Central Asia, located in the heart of Eurasia, forms a part of India's extended neighborhood. Its geographical proximity, strategic location, and historical linkages make it an important partner for India.

Recent efforts to increase the outreach to central Asia –

- A new impetus to India's connectivity project with Central Asia was added when India-Iran-Uzbekistan signed an agreement for the use of the strategically important chabahar port located in Iran.
- There is the Ashgabat agreement which India is part of and similarly, the North-South Corridor project along with the maritime connectivity project through the proposed "Chennai-Vladivostok" route (though it will connect Siberia through indo Pacific corridor.

- It can also be further connected to Kazakhstan because of land connectivity options as India is initiating major projects in recent years to give a strong boost to its 'Look North Policy'.
- The trilateral cooperation between New Delhi, Teheran, and Tashkent will have a geopolitical ramification on three counts. These are : a) It will facilitate India's growing connectivity with Central Asian countries which in turn will contribute to the fruition of trade and economic cooperation; b) over a couple of years other Central Asian countries may also join this endeavor. As has been reported, these Central Asian countries are also showing their keenness to become part of this Chabahar multilateral initiative for use of the port; c) studies suggest that Central Asian countries are also interested to reap maximum benefits (both geopolitically and geo-economically) from the emerging Indo-Pacific strategic corridor and are interested to use the Chabahar port as an entrepot.

Conclusion

Today Central Asia is the region that is considered a critical area in the foreign policy of the West, South, and East Asian countries. As India cements its position as one of the fastest-growing major economies of the world, its increased engagement with the Central Asian region can lead to mutually beneficial gains — both in economic and strategic terms.

76. What is cloud computing? Discuss the recent government efforts in the field of cloud computing.

Approach

The candidate needs to address the question in two parts where the first part should explain what is cloud computing and the second part should discuss the recent government measures in the field of cloud computing as well as some way forward.

Introduction

Cloud computing is the delivery of computing services—including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence—over the Internet ("the cloud") to offer faster innovation, flexible resources, and economies of scale.

Body

- Cloud computing is named as such because the information being accessed is found remotely in the cloud or a virtual space. Companies that provide cloud services enable users to access all their data via the Internet. This means the user is not required to be in a specific place to gain access to it, allowing the user to work remotely.
- Cloud computing takes all the effort involved in crunching and processing data away from the device one carries around or sit and work at. The Internet becomes the cloud, and one's data, work, and applications are available from any device with which one can connect to Internet, anywhere in the world.
- Cloud computing can be both public and private. Public cloud services provide their services over the Internet for a fee. Private cloud services, on the other hand, only provide services to a certain number of people.

Cloud computing offers immense potential and benefits for all types of organizations. In India, government's support in embracing emerging latest technologies and best practices derived from different cloud deployment scenarios and application areas is increasing, which is evident from the following points –

1. To take advantage of cloud computing, the Indian government has launched an ambitious initiative — "GI Cloud", which has been dubbed "MeghRaj". The focus of this initiative is to accelerate the delivery of electronic services in the country and optimize government ICT spending. This will ensure optimal infrastructure utilization and accelerate the development and deployment of eGov applications.
2. E-Gram Panchayat: To improve the quality of governance, the Indian government initiated an e-governance scheme known as ePanchayat to simplify and enhance internal government operations. The cloud model of e-Gram Panchayat depicts a high-level architecture intended to facilitate internal government operations.

3. Indian Railways on Cloud: To avoid losses, the Indian government decided to implement cloud technology for Indian railways. Cloud computing has led to vast advancements in the railway network. The techniques like Tickets with unique QR (Quick Response) – Code and ticket checking with QR Scanner, Wi-Fi enabled GPS devices set up on each train are managed using cloud storage.

4. Kisan Suvidha: The Indian government came up with portal Kisan Suvidha to help farmers with the relevant information instantly. It delivers farmers with detailed knowledge on weather, market prices, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, agriculture machinery, dealers, agro advisories, plant protection and IPM practices.

5. DigiLocker: DigiLocker is the public cloud-based storage introduced by the Indian government for the citizens of India. It is much more than an online drive where you upload your documents to be accessed depending on your convenience. The documents are digitally verified and signed by the government of India in a few seconds with an authentic seal of DigiLocker verification.

6. eHospital: eHospital is the cloud-based healthcare projected implemented by the government of India to ease the process of healthcare management. The system was designed to speed up services like online registration, payment of fees and appointment, etc. This hospital model assigns a unique identification number to every patient at the time of registration. The medical history of a particular patient can be accessed using the number.

But to realise cloud's potential, a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. Following **Way Forward** can be considered –

- Address data localisation issues: Many a time data localisation or data residency or other regulatory compliances are considered as roadblocks for cloud adoption.
- In addition, re-looking at the existing technology and data protection standards and updating them to include the best practices for cloud is also recommended.
- Explore beyond infrastructure services: Simply migrating application, data, and its associated infrastructure to the cloud may not allow government or public sector entities to leverage its full benefits. Instead, they need to explore platform services and move towards embracing cloud-native architectures.

Conclusion

In this technology-driven era, the government is considered as active if it is agile and can keep up with the growing demands and expectation of its citizens with the help of its services and computing capabilities where cloud computing can help in achieving Digital India mission.

77. What is the mandate of the World Health Organisation (WHO)? Comment upon its performance during the COVID pandemic.

Approach

Since question has asked you to comment, it requires you to express an opinion or reaction. It is important to pick out the main points/core and give Your opinion based on the information or the arguments.

Introduction

World health organization are building a better, healthier future for people all over the world. They are Working with 194 Member States, across six regions, and from more than 150 offices With their staff united in a shared commitment to achieve better health for everyone, everywhere. Together they strive to combat diseases – communicable diseases like influenza and HIV, and non communicable diseases like cancer and heart disease.

Body

Mandate of the World Health Organisation (WHO) –

- Together the worker of WHO strive to combat diseases – communicable diseases like influenza and HIV, and noncommunicable diseases like cancer and heart disease.
- It help mothers and children survive and thrive so they can look forward to a healthy old age. We ensure the safety of the air people breathe, the food they eat, the water they drink – and the medicines and vaccines they need.
- Their primary role is to direct and coordinate international health within the United Nations system.
- Their main areas of work are health systems; health through the life-course; noncommunicable and communicable diseases; preparedness, surveillance and response; and corporate services.

Its performance during the COVID pandemic –

- Much of the criticism of WHO asserts that it failed to exercise global health leadership and instead became a tool of Chinese politics, power, and propaganda.
- This critique holds that WHO had the ability to question China's handling of the outbreak in Wuhan so that the organization could better prepare the world for a dangerous disease—but that WHO failed to act decisively.
- The criticism raises questions about WHO's authority to challenge states during serious outbreaks for the good of global health. In contrast, praise for WHO often highlights how it has its deployed scientific skills, epidemiological

expertise, medical know-how, outbreak-response capacities, and global networks in helping China and other countries.

- These commendations emphasize the imperative for WHO to work with governments in battling outbreaks.

Conclusion

The pandemic and the controversies associated with it have created an immediate crisis for WHO as COVID-19 rages on. But it's also created a prospective crisis because the outbreak and political reactions to it will shape the future of WHO. The present back-and-forth between WHO's critics and defenders previews the coming tussle over how to repair global health governance and reform WHO in light of this disaster. Although the pandemic is not over, the pillory and praise of WHO are worth exploring now so that the coming tsunami of demands for change do not destroy the organization in order to save it.

78. What are the recent initiatives announced by the government for promoting indigenous farming techniques? Discuss.

Approach

A straightforward question where in the candidate needs to discuss the recent initiatives announced by the government for promoting indigenous farming techniques.

Introduction

As per UN, by 2050, the world will have 10 billion people, with India accounting for 1.73 billion. Reclaiming agriculture's spiritual roots through indigenous farming and locally grown food emerges as key, including the need for designing and implementing a more sovereign food system. The COVID-19 pandemic has made revisiting these aspects all the more necessary.

Body

Indigenous farming is in a nascent stage in India. About 2.78 million hectare of farmland was under organic cultivation as of March 2020, according to the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. In this light, the recent initiatives by the government for promoting indigenous farming techniques include –

- National Mission For Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA): National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) has been formulated for enhancing agricultural productivity especially in rain fed areas focusing on integrated farming, water use efficiency, soil health management and synergizing resource conservation with the help of indigenous methodology.
- Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY): Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, launched in 2015 is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management (SHM) of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA). Under PKVY, Organic farming is promoted through adoption of organic villages by cluster approach and Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification.
- As per 17th Lok sabha standing committee on agriculture report dated March, 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) proposed 'Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati' (BPKP) as a new sub-mission under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY).
- Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region (MOVCD): It is a Central Sector Scheme, a sub-mission under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) It was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in 2015 and aims to develop certified organic production in a value chain mode to link growers with consumers and to support the development of the entire value chain.

- Zero Budget Natural Farming: Zero budget natural farming is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices.
- Participatory Guarantee System (PGS): PGS is a process of certifying organic products, which ensures that their production takes place in accordance with laid-down quality standards. PGS Green is given to chemical free produce under transition to 'organic' which takes 3 years. It is mainly for domestic purpose.
- National Program for Organic Production (NPOP): NPOP grants organic farming certification through a process of third party certification for export purposes. Soil Health Card Scheme has led to a decline of 8-10% in the use of chemical fertilizers and also raised productivity by 5-6%.
- One District - One Product (ODOP): The programme aims to encourage more visibility and sale of indigenous and specialized products/crafts of Uttar Pradesh, generating employment at the district level. The presence of aggregators is imperative to bring about economies of scale for the small and marginal farmers.
- In addition to farming, the government is also emphasizing on livestock, fisheries and development of water bodies. The Rashtriya Gokul Mission, based on the conservation and development of indigenous bovine species, is an integral part of the overall development of agriculture sector. This will benefit a lot of small and marginal farmers including landless agriculture labourers who possess these indigenous species of bovines.

Way Forward –

- The industry and the government are already supporting the shift to sustainable agriculture by popularising the use of science-based good agronomic practices (GAP) that are climate-smart and financially viable.
- Enhanced collaboration will be a critical imperative to transform Indian agriculture. The government could identify specific areas along the agro value chain where public-private partnership (PPP) will benefit farmers. This will encourage the private sector to come forward with higher investments for innovation.

Conclusion

As we move into a new decade, with the right thought leadership and government support and emphasis on the indigenous farming techniques, the agriculture sector can rewrite India's growth story and place our country in the league of the top five global agricultural markets.

79. Analyze the key issues in India's present defense procurement regime?

Approach

Since the question has asked you to analyze, it means to examine (something) methodically and in detail, typically in order to explain and interpret it.

Introduction

Despite the increasing threats from both China and Pakistan and emerging security challenges, India's spending on defense has dropped by four per cent in terms of the government's total expenditure over the last six years.

Body

Key issues in India's present defense procurement regime –

- Public interest has not been defined or elaborated upon, and this could provide the government with far-reaching termination rights.
- The multiplicity of options with no clarity as to which recourse is linked to a specific default, could result in tremendous uncertainty for the vendor.
- No restrictions have been specified on the exploitation of the IP acquired or as to the type of contracts this right applies to (for instance, only jointly-developed IP or only "Make" contracts).
- It will be interesting to see how these agencies coordinate with each other and with the vendor to ensure a seamless transition.
- Both equity and non-equity investment is contemplated. However, the parameters of calculating offset credit for the non-equity route is currently unclear.
- While our soldiers are one of the finest in the world, it is the lack of resources that has been their bane ever since the Chinese war that exposed them to their vulnerability against an army vastly superior in armament and logistics.

Conclusion

Napoleon Bonaparte, military leader and former Emperor of France, said, "The army marches on its stomach." It was metaphoric. Troops can win wars if they are well stocked with not just food but guns, ammunition, clothing and more. Modi's vision 'to make in India', especially defense equipment is laudable but we need urgently a well thought out and a clear defense procurement policy keeping in mind the strategic vision and interests of India and that is well informed and dictated by the needs of the three services, in the next three to six months, that can be reviewed once in three years.

80. What measures have been initiated by the government to make Indian enterprises more competitive in the global market? Discuss.

Approach

Since the question is asking you to discuss, it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion. In simple terms an examiner expects one to discuss various perspectives and present a logical argument.

Introduction

Manufacturing in India was high-cost and not really competitive. If there is strong competition, you will make all efforts to improve your products, reduce your costs. That has not happened. Only a few sectors such as telecom and auto became competitive, and that has led to products in India being world class, but those are very limited sectors.
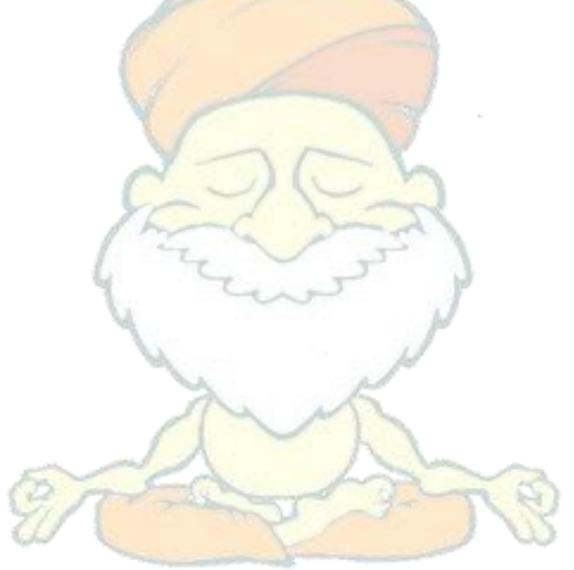
Body

The government is taking a series of measures to make India highly competitive in the global economy. These includes –

- The government announced Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for 10 key sectors to spur growth in manufacturing in a big way.
- This (PLI scheme) is one of the biggest schemes that the government has come out with to support the private sector in manufacturing with objective to provide a major impetus to manufacturing and exports. It is a $26-billion scheme, which provides production-linked incentives in 10 champion sectors and this five years of support should spur growth in manufacturing in a big way.
- And, the PLI scheme for other sectors is going through the process of approval.
- In the auto industry, there is a lot of push from the government on domestic manufacturing.
- There is effort from the government in creating an assured demand visible to investors in the future.
- Indian government has adopted "Make in India" as a core policy initiative to encourage and accelerate growth in manufacturing sector and make Indian market highly competitive in global economy.
- Indian government is trying to make smart investments in asset productivity in order to increase the manufacturing productivity such as efficient line balancing, lean plant layout, and process de-bottlenecking.
- In order to enable itself to expand economic hubs beyond tier 1 cities, the government is trying to develop localized services and local networks across the country.

Conclusion

Indian manufacturing, for decades, has been operating at a growth rate of 6-8% a year. The government is trying to get back to it by the end of this year. But the real issue is that it is not enough, as the finance minister said in the budget speech. A double-digit growth in manufacturing is required if the $5 trillion economy target is to be met. The Union Budget is an important milestone. It's a forward-looking growth centric, capacity building and debt-funded budget aimed at securing long-term economic growth and global competitiveness.

81. What are the recent debates surrounding the concept and practice of secularism in India? What are your views on the same?

Approach

Candidate is expected to define Indian secularism and give a brief evolution while citing judgements of S.C. Underlining recent debates on secularism answer can be concluded by commenting on future of secularism in India.

Introduction

The concept of secularism is multifaceted as well as flexible. The classical "Western" theories have emphasized on the "Wall of Separation" model of secularism. This model was best summarized by Donald Eugene Smith as encompassing three relationships between the individual and religion (freedom of religion), the state and the individual (citizenship) and the state and religion (separation of church and state).

Body

Indian secularism –

- Indian Constitution guarantees to its citizens six fundamental rights, one of which is the right to freedom of religion. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution gives each citizen: Freedom of Conscience, Right to Profess any religion, Right to Practice any religion and Right to Propagate any religion

- Article 25 covers not only religious beliefs (doctrines) but also religious practices (rituals). Moreover, these rights are available to all persons—citizens as well as non-citizens. However, there are reasonable restrictions on the fundamental rights of the citizens and central government/state government, in time of need, can interfere with the religious affairs of the citizens.

- There has been question mark on the status of India as a secular state. D.E. Smith held that India has a few features of secular state and not all. He held that there are three features of secular state: Freedom of religion, Universal citizenship and right to equality and Separation between religion and state.

- In Indian context third feature is missing. So India is a secular state only in partial sense. In Indian context minorities are natural custodians of secular state, hence nature of Indian state as secular state will depend in large extent on minorities. If they're organised and conscious about their rights, India will remain secular.

- But Indian secularism with western lens is unjustified as every country has its unique model. Indian secularism emerged as a response to Muslim league's demand for separate state for Muslims in the subcontinent. From this lens we can outline some of the prominent features of secularism

1. State is not identified with any particular religion, but it not averts to use of religion.
2. No strict boundary rather porous boundary.
3. No active hostility towards religion, nor indifference
4. Different religions are in the foundation of state
5. There is no overarching idea.
6. Politically negotiated model.

- In S. R. Bommai case, Supreme Court held that India has both positive and negative secularism. Positive secularism means state shall regulate religion by law and negative secularism means state will not patronise any religion.
- S.C. also highlighted that religious tolerance and the idea of fraternity is the basic feature of Indian secularism.

Threats to Indian secularism –

- Misusing for Electoral benefits: Opportunistic distance (engagement or disengagement), mainly opportunistic alliance with religious communities, particularly for the sake of immediate electoral benefit
- Neglecting the Core Idea of Indian Secularism: Political parties have bizarrely interpreted 'respect' to mean cutting deals with aggressive or orthodox sections of religious groups at times igniting communal violence.
- Victimization of Communities: Principled intervention by State in one religion is viewed as discriminatory treatment by fringe sections of society leading to Politicisation of Secularism
- Politicisation of any one religious group leads to the competitive politicisation of other groups, thereby resulting in inter-religious conflict.
- Requires Continuous Civic Participation: India's constitutional secularism cannot be sustained by governments alone but requires collective commitment from an impartial judiciary, a scrupulous media, civil society activists, and an alert citizenry.

Way ahead –

- In Sabrimala case verdict S.C. gave decision in favour of women entering temple, but this has triggered larger issue of what exactly is principled distance means in context of Indian secularism.
- Views of justice Indu Malhotra and constitution of larger bench to decide on the same is indicative of new emerging debate in India on secularism.

Conclusion

Indian secularism is not an end in itself but a means to address religious plurality and sought to achieve peaceful coexistence of different religions. There is need to shift focus from a politically-led Secularism project to a socially-driven movement for justice.

82. What factors can be attributed for the failure in containing the spread of COVID-19? What measures would you suggest to curb the surge?

Approach

Mention the factors attributed for the failure in containing the spread of COVID-19. Also mention measures to curb the surge.

Introduction

Amid the COVID-19, the system that has been developed to provide a global response to epidemics and pandemics failed miserably. Covid-19 spread all over the world, shutting down entire countries. Governments, and even subnational governments competed fiercely for scarce medical stocks and critical supply chains disrupted due to governmental export restrictions.

Body

Factors attributing for the failure in containing the spread of COVID-19 –

- The WHO was simply not fit for this purpose. This stems from its subservience to major funding states, which dates back to the 1970s.
- Today, the WHO's total annual budget is around $5.6 billion. By comparison, the Australian federal health budget for 2019–20 was $120 billion, and even bigger if the states' budget is included.
- Unsurprisingly, this has had the effect of limiting the WHO's capacity, as well as making it highly responsive to its main funding states, thus jeopardizing its independence.
- A second important aspect of global health governance pre-Covid-19 was its operation through domestic state institutions. The underlying assumption was that infectious diseases are likely to emerge in developing countries, due to their poor sanitation and governance capacities, then spread to other parts of the world. Although very limited financial support was available to help developing countries build up their domestic health systems, they were subjected to ongoing surveillance by the WHO and developed countries.
- When disease outbreaks occurred, developed countries provided funding and intervened temporarily to address the immediate problem. This funding would eventually dry out as the outbreak was deemed to have been brought under control. Other than such intermittent interventions, which did little to build up primary health capacity in their recipient states, countries were largely supposed to use their own resources towards pandemic preparedness. Thus, very limited collective capacities had emerged, even within the European Union.
- These factors combined to create a spectacular global health governance failure after the emergence of Covid-19.

Measures to curb the surge –

- Broad lockdown is the simplest, most blunt tool to break the chain of transmission, which reduces the probability of people getting infected and lightens the load on the health care system.
- Mask mandates is another measure to curb the surge of the COVID virus.
- We should certainly shut down restaurants and bars first before anything else. Also curfews and limiting the gathering will keep a check on the surge too.

Conclusion

While these measures work short term, if they aren't implemented for a long enough time to truly decrease transmission, once they are relaxed there will be a rebound of cases. With the virus spreading at record speed, it's still far from clear that even data-driven, tailored approaches will work, given the enormous reach of the virus and the coming holiday travel season. Ultimately it's like there's a fire raging, but you're only able to douse the spot fires and wait for help.

83. What are the emerging issues in corporate governance during the COVID-19 pandemic? Discuss.

Approach

Discuss necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion. So discuss emerging issues in corporate governance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

Since the onset of Covid-19, corporate boards have faced a string of difficult decisions. Take as an example the question of dividend payments: Ordinarily, the decision would be a relatively straightforward matter of applying a stated dividend policy, following past practice, or choosing an amount based on shareholder expectations and the company's earnings for the period. But this year, with Covid-19 decimating the economy and looming uncertainty about the depth and duration of the crisis, the decision became a complex matter of weighing and balancing multiple factors — at least for companies flush enough to consider it at all.

Body

The emerging issues in corporate governance during the COVID-19 pandemic –

- The new environment is characterized by an increasingly complex set of pressures and demands from various stakeholder groups, heightened These factors are complicating board decision-making and challenging the shareholder-centric model of governance that has guided boards and business leaders for the past several decades.
- The pandemic has brought home the tight connection between business and society, and underscored the threat posed by risks stemming from large-scale societal problems that proponents of the shareholder model have traditionally regarded as outside the purview of business. The pandemic has shown that, theory aside, companies cannot so easily disconnect themselves from society-at-large.
- In the face of Covid-19, some companies struggled because their customers disappeared. Others saw their workforce reduced to a skeleton crew of essential employees. Still others grappled with supply chain disruptions, unsustainable debt, or insufficient capital to fund their operations.
- In the wake of Covid-19, boards will likely face increased pressure to incorporate stakeholder perspectives and voices, especially those of employees, into their oversight and decision processes. They will also be challenged to show that the company is performing well for all its stakeholders. External pressure aside, boards that have learned from Covid-19 will want to do this for their own purposes.

- The pandemic has laid bare glaring disparities in pay across society and within companies.
- It also has brought to the surface several problems with the shareholder model's traditional pay-for-performance paradigm, most notably its indifference to issues of equity (in the sense of fairness, including across gender and race) and to externalities such as impacts on third parties and the environment.

Conclusion

Whether Covid-19 is truly an inflection point for corporate governance is yet to be seen, but there is no doubt that the pandemic has challenged core premises of the agency-based model of governance in ways that have important implications for boards. In the flurry of Covid-inspired activity, it is important that boards not lose sight of their central functions as governing bodies of the companies they serve.

84. What are the emerging frontiers in the field of conventional energy resources? Discuss the key issues surrounding those.

Approach

The question has two parts students are expected to address each part equally, also it is important to understand the demand of the question in each part and write answer accordingly.

Introduction

Conventional sources of energy are the natural energy resources which are present in a limited quantity and are being used for a long time. They are called non-renewable sources as once they are depleted; they cannot be generated at the speed which can sustain its consumption rate. They are formed from decaying matter over hundreds of millions of years. These resources have been depleted to a great extent due to their continuous exploitation. It is believed that the deposits of petroleum in our country will be exhausted within few decades and the coal reserves can last for a hundred more years. Some common examples of conventional sources of energy include coal, petroleum, natural gas and electricity.

Body

Emerging frontiers in the field of conventional energy resource –

*   The hydrogen industry and the energy industry brushed shoulders at multiple points throughout their history. The first demonstrations of water electrolysis to produce carbon-free hydrogen fuel and fuel cells to convert hydrogen to electricity were engineered in the 1800s. Hydrogen was used to fuel the first internal combustion engines. Green Hydrogen is currently enjoying unprecedented political and corporate interest, at least 24 countries have now drafted policies or are setting up strategies for the hydrogen economy.
*   Hydrogen is versatile. Hydrogen can be used as a chemical feedstock, fuel, or energy carrier and storage, and has many possible applications across industries, heavy-duty transport, power, and buildings sectors. Multi-sectoral applications provide a conducive environment towards an exponential rise in demand and subsequent benefits of scale.
*   Hydrogen is uniquely clean. The USP of hydrogen is that it can help to decarbonise industrial processes and economic sectors, where reducing carbon emissions is both urgent and hard to achieve. Fertilisers, oil-refining, heavy industry like steel and heavy-duty transport are some examples of hard sectors that likely will need hydrogen to decarbonise.
*   Biofuel is the other frontier in the field of conventional energy resource which has been extensively researched over a period of time Biofuels in India are of strategic importance as it augers well with the ongoing initiatives of the Government such as Make in India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill

Development and offers great opportunity to integrate with the ambitious targets of doubling of Farmers Income, Import Reduction, Employment Generation, Waste to Wealth Creation.

- The Government approved the National Policy on Biofuels-2018 in June 2018. The policy has the objective of reaching 20% ethanol-blending and 5% biodiesel-blending by the year 2030. Among other things, the policy expands the scope of feedstock for ethanol production and has provided for incentives for production of advanced biofuels.
- Molten salt reactors are the new phenomena in the field of nuclear energy. Nevertheless, advocates say one emerging technology, the molten salt reactor, could provide carbon-free electricity with fewer radiation risks than traditional nuclear.

Issues surrounding these new frontiers –

- Research in these technologies is still in initial phase barring biofuels it is going to take a long time to get these technologies to show their impact at global level.
- Making ethanol from grains is the worst possible solution, not only because of its impact on food production, but mostly because of its poor energy yield. In fact, between fertilizers, seeds, harvesting, transportation, and treatment, the amount of energy contained in a litter of ethanol is barely more than that required to obtain it from cereals. Therefore, from an energy standpoint, it is unreasonable to use this type of raw material.
- Also, the cost of energy through these new systems is quite high which makes these technologies ineffective in the long run.
- Environmental concerns are the other issues that need to be looked into, transition into renewable sources of energy has been in focus from quite a long time now there has been a significant shift from non-renewable to renewable sources of energy throughout the globe.

Conclusion

Coal will continue to be an abundant, though potentially highly contaminating source, and it is necessary to make advances in its use with the capture and storage of CO_2 but at this time, the most important challenge may well be to encourage renewable energies in order to make them a significant percentage of the total supply. Solar energy is more abundant, but has the problem of dispersion. At some point in the near future, it will have to become the dominant and truly massive, sustainable and unlimited renewable energy source. That will call for the solution of technological problems that limit its spread and affect its current high price, and will require decisive public support.

85. What are the major areas of dispute related to water resources between India and its neighbours? Analyse.

Approach

Candidates are expected to first to write about disputes of India over water resources with neighbouring countries. And try to analyse on major areas of disputes related to it.

Introduction

Water dispute is a term describing a conflict between countries, states, or groups over the rights to access water resources. The United Nations recognises that water disputes result from opposing interests of water users, public or private. A wide range of water conflicts appear throughout history, though rarely are traditional wars waged over water alone.

Body

Water dispute in South Asia –

* Water remains a politically contested issue in much of South Asia. The region is facing water shortage it will continue to face increasing demands on energy and water with rapid industrialisation. UN reports that by 2030, water demand in India will grow to almost 1.5 trillion cubic situation is further aggravated by the India's water disputes with its neighbours and inter-state river water disputes in India.
* Combine these factors with the impact of climate change that's reducing the amount of water in the Brahmaputra and many other basin also changing the patterns of water flow.

Water resources disputes between India and its neighbour –

* India-China Water Dispute: As an upstream riparian region, China maintains an advantageous position and can build infrastructure to intentionally prevent water from flowing downstream. China's dam-building and water division plans along the Brahmaputra (called Yarlung Zangbo in China) is a source of tension between the two neighbours, despite the two having signed several MoUs on strengthening communication and strategic trust.
* India–Bangladesh water issue: Sharing the waters of the Teesta river, which originates in the Himalayas and flows through Sikkim and West Bengal to merge with the Brahmaputra in Assam and (Jamuna in Bangladesh), is perhaps the most contentious issue between two friendly neighbours, India and Bangladesh.
* India–Nepal water issues: Since 1954, when the Kosi Agreement was signed between India and Nepal, talks between the two governments have stalled and water rights issues have not been addressed. The dispute between India

and Nepal might seem minor but it gains strategic importance, because the disputed area lies near the Sino-Indian border. Also delimitation of the boundary along the Maha Kali River is matter of dispute.

- India–Pakistan Water Dispute: Accord called the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960 was carried forward. The Indian Government has more than 40 projects that are either already completed or in the proposal stage on the western rivers. The carrying of such activities within the western rivers has irked Pakistan. The latest dispute is over hydroelectric projects that India is building along the Chenab River.
- India–Bhutan water dispute: Initially, the cooperation was based on the development of small-scale hydro projects such as Tala, Chukha and Kurichu. On the other hand, the people of Bhutan raised objections to such projects on their long run effects in the country. For instance, if Bhutan ever decides to construct storage projects, issues will get intense and more problematic when it comes to dealing with India.

Conclusion

Freshwater is a precious commodity and a strategic asset whose importance in geopolitics cannot be underestimated. Under such circumstances, the increasing need for power and stable water levels could prompt reconsideration in bilateral water-sharing treaties in future.

86. What are the factors responsible for the high fuel cost in India? How can the government address the rising cost? Suggest.

Approach

Mention the factors responsible for the high fuel cost in India and then suggest how the government can address the rising cost.

Introduction

Petrol is now retailing above Rs 90 per litre in all major cities including Delhi and is on the verge of crossing Rs 100 in major cities. It has already hit a century in some circles. Diesel, too, has climbed to levels never seen before in the country. Experts have said the continuous increase in fuel prices will have a widespread impact on citizens and the overall economy.

Body

THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIGH FUEL COST IN INDIA –

- Firming of international crude oil rates and extremely high taxes levied on the fuel are the key reasons behind the latest round of petrol and diesel price hike in the country.
- International crude oil price including the Indian basket of crude, which comprises Oman, Dubai and Brent crude. Global crude oil prices have been increasing after organisation of the petroleum exporting countries (OPEC)-plus decided to continue supply curbs.
- Crises in countries like Venezuela and Iran are increasing. There is a pressure on oil prices due to decrease in production.
- Global currencies have weakened against the US dollar. As the rupee value is depreciating, oil refineries have to pay more rupees to import crude oil. This is also one of the reasons why fuel prices are high.
- Being the third-largest importer of oil in the world, the recent firming of international crude oil prices has severely impacted India, where citizens are paying extremely high rates for fuel in comparison to neighboring countries.
- The biggest reason behind higher fuel prices in the country is the high rate of central and state taxes. At the moment, Indians pay one of the highest taxes on fuel in the world.
- Since India follows a dynamic system for altering fuel rates, oil marketing companies are mostly responsible for the recent hikes and the government has no control over it. However, the government does impose a tax on the base price of fuel.

HOW CAN THE GOVERNMENT ADDRESS THE RISING COST?

- Reducing taxes on petroleum products will result in a reduction in costs of transport and thereby reduces the price of many consumer goods. This will result in an increase in markets and economy and also reduces the burden on common people.
- Instead of depending on these taxes on petrol & diesel, the Indian government needs to create more revenue sources such as increasing the number of people that pay income tax, recovering bad loans of public sector banks etc.
- More and more people are buying their own vehicles, especially after witnessing the pandemic and hence the demand for petrol and diesel is increasing and thereby the pressure on foreign exchange reserves and 'Trade deficit 'are increasing. This will further lower the value of the rupee. To reduce the dependence on crude oil imports, there is a need to invest in the exploration of crude oil reserves in the country.
- There is a dire need to encourage people to use electric vehicles and to use renewable energy resources. This will reduce the burden on foreign exchange reserves as well as leads us towards eco-friendly living.

Conclusion

If the crude oil prices are increased in the coming days, there will be a huge burden on people whether they own a vehicle or not. Because high fuel prices increase the cost of transport and thereby increases the price of consumer goods. To avoid that situation, the government needs to work on reforms in petroleum pricing.

87. Good governance is the cornerstone of a successful pandemic mitigation strategy. Comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected first to write about the Good governance and its basic characteristics. Then comment on how good governance is the cornerstone of a successful pandemic mitigation strategy with proper substantiation.

Introduction

In times of crisis such as the current COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social repercussions, public governance matters more than ever. Governance arrangements have played a critical role in countries' immediate responses, and will continue to be crucial both to the recovery and to building a "new normal" once the crisis has passed.

Body

Good governance and its characteristics –

- In the 1992 report entitled "Governance and Development", the World Bank set out its definition of Good Governance. It defined Good Governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development".
- Good governance has 8 major characteristics.'It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law.

Good governance as a cornerstone of a successful pandemic mitigation strategy –

- During the COVID-19 pandemic the challenges have become extraordinarily difficult due to the speed and scale of COVID-19 response programs, work overload on implementing and accountability institutions, including media and civil society, and workforce safety concerns and lockdowns.
- The public investment, be it for obtaining necessary health products and supplies, or for providing essential public services is channelled mainly through public procurement. Therefore the impacts of chosen procurement strategies have an immediate effect on the effectiveness of policies and efficiency of administration for dealing with the pandemic and its social and economic consequences.
- The trends in policy-making towards a more pro-active approach to building strategies that reduce risk, enhance resilience, and focus on recovery and functionality by Good Governance has been a new Toolkit.
- The crisis has created environments that was ripe for corruption and bribery. Identifying and addressing corruption risks thus was crucial to protect trust in

public institutions and business, and to galvanise public confidence in the governments' ability to mobilise an effective crisis response.

- Issues such as trust in government and trust in expert advice, and the boundary between the experts and the political decision-making interface were brought to the fore by the crisis. Governments faced with the need to synthesise information from multiple sources and actors, and to use it to feed into governments' plans and decision making to tackle crisis.

- Maintaining a trusted connection between decision makers and the scientific suppliers of evidence, is essential for effective decision making in an environment faced with very high uncertainty. For example, by including experts from a variety of backgrounds this ensures that decisions are informed by credible, neutral advice.

- The consultation of civil society organisations, the private sector, citizens, and international organisations can contribute to the quality of the advice given, as well as add credibility and inclusiveness.

- Effective public communication by the central government and Behavioural communication campaigns have played an important role in facilitating the enforcement of regulations, by nudging or instructing wide segments of the population to comply with required measures – from washing their hands, to respecting the provisions of lockdowns and social distancing.

- One of the more visible strategy has been Aarogya Setu mobile app, which was rolled as e governance model and uses a combination of bluetooth, global positioning systems (GPS), artificial intelligence (AI)and data analytics for contact-tracking and contact-tracing.

- The outbreak of the pandemic has seriously disrupted the functioning of both these institutions which have hitherto been in charge of ensuring executive accountability. However, the present crisis has unfolded a situation where ensuring extraordinary governmental accountability, transparency and responsiveness are crucial like never before.

- Unfortunately, however, the lockdowns imposed by governments to contain the virus had also affected the operation of the information regime in many countries, including India. RTI/FOI activities came to a stand-still in these countries in the early phases of the lockdowns, making it impossible for the public to access critical government information.

Conclusion

The effective functioning of governance is the prime concern of every citizen of the country. The citizens are ready to pay the price for good services offered by the state, but what is required is a transparent, accountable and intelligible governance system absolutely free from bias and prejudices

88. Discuss the key challenges being faced by infrastructure financing. How can those be addressed?

Approach

Question is straight forward. Candidate can outline the issues faced by the India in financing infrastructure projects. Way forward can be given citing some examples and data.

Introduction

India's infrastructure at the beginning of the century was in need of a total overhaul. It was a drag on the rapid growth of the country's economy and adversely affected the lives of Indian citizens. Before the market liberalisation of the 1990s, "infrastructure projects were typically financed from the limited resources of the public sector, which was characterised by inadequate capacity addition and poor quality of service". The government looked to public-private partnerships to promote investment and revitalise infrastructure sector.

Body

Key challenges in infrastructure financing –

*   In the 1990s, the economy grew rapidly - by 7%-9% a year - and the pressures on infrastructure increased. As a result, infrastructure came to be regarded as a major constraint in sustaining the rapid growth and in attracting investment or doing business in India.
*   India has been focussing on infrastructure development across various sectors, which demand huge financial resources. However large social welfare expenditure and low tax-to- GDP ratio limits government capacity to fund them.
*   Fiscal Burden: Almost half of the total investment in the infrastructure sector is done by the Government through budget allocations. But Government funds have competing demands, such as, education, health, employment generation, among others.
*   Asset-Liability Mismatch of Commercial Banks: Commercial banking sector's ability to extend long-term loans to the infrastructure sector is limited.
*   Need for an Efficient and Vibrant Corporate Bond Market: The corporate bond market is still a long way to go in providing adequate financing to the infrastructure sector in India.
*   Insufficiency of User Charges: A large part of the infrastructure sector in India especially irrigation, water supply, urban sanitation, and state road transport is not amenable to commercialisation for various reasons. Government cannot levy user charges.
*   Legal and Procedural Issues: Issues relating to land acquisition and environmental clearances add uncertainty which affects the risk appetite of

investors as well as banks. With financing in long gestation period it becomes difficult to keep continuous flow of capital.

What can be done?

- The Economic Survey 2017-18 has assessed India's infrastructure financing needs at $4.5 trillion by 2040. The Vijay Kelkar committee had put out a balanced report in 2015 on overhauling the PPP ecosystem, including governance reform, institutional redesign, and capacity-building.
- The government is planning to set up a new Development Finance Institution (DFI) essentially to fill the gap in long-term finance for infrastructure sectors. It will be used to finance both social and economic infrastructure projects identified under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
- DFIs provide long-term credit for capital-intensive investments spread over a long period and yielding low rates of return. Soon after independence, the institutional framework for development banking began- IFCI (1948), IDBI (1964), IIBI (1972), NABARD and EXIM Bank (1982), SIDBI (1990), etc.
- Government should avoid trying to minimise risk to themselves by passing on uncertain elements in a project like the land acquisition risk to the private partner.

Government initiatives –

- Under UDAY scheme the government has taken steps to improve operational and financial parameters of discoms.
- National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) with an initial corpus of Rs 40,000 crore.
- With Initiatives such as 'Housing for All' and 'Smart Cities,' the government is working on reducing the bottlenecks that impede growth in the infrastructure sector.
- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) launched Masala Bonds in May 2017, for raising capital for funding the infrastructure projects in India.
- Relaxation in External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) norms.
- National Infrastructure Pipeline: The National Infrastructure Pipeline is a group of social and economic infrastructure projects in India over a period of five years with a sanctioned amount of ₹102 lakh crore.

Conclusion

India is one of the fastest growing large economy in the world. Combined with aspirations of young population, India needs world class infrastructure to emerge as dominant player on global platform. For the rapid development, seamless supply of capital is the basic necessity. If the policies are made to address the bottlenecks, we are not far away from realising our potential.

89. What measures have been taken to improve the employability of graduates in India? Why haven't we achieved much success on this front? Examine.

Approach

The candidate needs to highlight the measures taken in India to improve the employability of graduates in the first part of the answer while the second part should examine the reasons for limited success on this front of employability of graduates.

Introduction

Employability and education have been two of the top issues for the citizens of the country. Here, employability skills are defined as a range of competencies or abilities that are necessary for graduates to gain success in the labour market at all employment levels which benefits themselves, the community and the economy.

Body

How Government is Increasing Employability of Engineers in India –

- AICTE in association with various organisations carries out an employability Skill Test of pre-final and final year graduate students of AICTE approved institutions annually.
- To increase the employability of graduates in the country, Ministry of Human Resource Development is working along with Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) under National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to undertake Apprenticeship/Internship embedded degree programmes with the core focus on the development of knowledge, skills, aptitude and on-job training.
- Furthermore, the government has also recommended that courses on nine emerging technologies like AI, data science, IoT, cyber security, robotics, design, quantum computing, AR/VR, Block chain and 3D printing and should be introduced in UG engineering courses.
- In order to revamp the engineering curriculum and to impart the requisite skill set to the students to enhance the employability of engineering students, AICTE has approved an action plan with the following objectives: Induction Training, Revision of Curriculum, Mandatory Internships, Industry Readiness and Mandatory Accreditation.
- Further, AICTE is implementing schemes namely National Employment Enhancement Mission (NEEM) and Employability Enhancement Training Program (EETP) to enhance the employability of the students.
- In addition, AICTE has also partnered with Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Govt of India, Internshala, NETiit and LinkedIn to provide internship opportunities and industry exposure to students for aligning their technical knowhow with industry requirements.

- Apart from that, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is taking the following measures to increase the employability of graduates in the country, particularly engineering graduates:

  - Preparation of outcome-based model curriculum for Diploma, Undergraduate (UG) and Post Graduate (PG) courses in Engineering and PGDM/MBA Courses.
  - Exam reforms and formulation of comprehensive teacher's training. 8 modules are proposed for the incumbent as well as in-service teachers.
  - Mandatory internship, Revision of model curriculum, and Industry readiness accreditation.

The employability of the fresh graduates has risen as a result of different measures taken by Government. As per the data maintained by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the overall employability has increased from 34% to more than 45% in the last five years. This showcases the success of governmental initiatives, but these have been limited in nature. The reasons for the same include –

- Uncertainty among graduates: Lack of focus and definite career path among graduates. As per a latest report, around 40% of the engineering graduates is preparing for various competitive exams in government sector which his not even relate to engineering.
- Sanction of new institutes: The ease of securing approval from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to set up engineering colleges and other higher education regulators has led to the mushrooming of institutes. These are understaffed and lack in qualified, competent and suitable faculty members. E.g. the number of approved institutes in Maharashtra alone is around 650.
- Teaching methods: Most of the institutions still follow traditional way of teaching without realizing that the information is available over the internet and the need of the hour is the application level teaching for practical purposes.
- There is no policy framework for participation of foreign universities in higher education. Also, there is no overarching funding body to promote and encourage research and innovation. Public funding in the sector remains inadequate.

Conclusion

In today's era, staying updated with technological advancements and rapid changes in surrounding are of prime importance for both success and growth of Individual and employability where to effectively skill, up-skill and re-skill India's workforce, all stakeholders must coordinate upon improving the larger economic prospects as well as new end employment prospects.

90. Do a critical assessment of India's performance on the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Approach

Candidates are expected first to write about the sustainable development goals and then do critical assessment of India performance to achieve the SDG.

Introduction

Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This most widely accepted definition of Sustainable Development was given by the Brundtland Commission in its report Our Common Future (1987). Sustainable development (SD) calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.

Body

India, got committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals India played a significant role in making the declaration and its progress in achieving these goals are crucial such as –

- There is notable progress on SDGs 6, 7, 9 and 11. While, a decline in the Maternal Mortality Ratio has contributed to our improved performance in the area of 'Good Health and Well-Being', ramping up toilet coverage under Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan has raised the country's score on 'Clean Water and Sanitation'.
- The commendable performance on Goal 7 is due to expanded access to clean cooking fuel and the government's massive electrification drive. Similarly, on Goal 9, the progress can be attributed largely to a significant improvement in rural road connectivity and increased mobile phone penetration.
- Our performance on Goal 11 has been boosted by better access to housing through the Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana as well as more widespread adoption of door-to-door waste collection and processing.
- NITI Aayog has undertaken a mapping of schemes as they relate to the SDGs and their targets, and has identified lead and supporting ministries for each target. They have adopted a government-wide approach to sustainable development, emphasising the interconnected nature of the SDGs across economic, social and environmental pillars.
- The reforms have included fiscal consolidation, inflation targeting, improved governance all around, accelerated infrastructure development (SDG 9), curbing of corruption (SDG 16), Aadhaar Act for providing unique identity.
- The MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee of a minimum of 100 days of wage employment programme generated over 2 billion person-days of employment (SDG 8) during the last year. Women and disadvantaged groups have been the largest beneficiaries (SDG 5 and SDG 10) of the programme

accounting for 56% and 39% of person-days of work generated during last year.
- There is now compelling evidence that rapid growth India has achieved following the economic reforms initiated in 1991 has led to significant reduction in poverty. The evidence shows that poverty fell across all economic, social and religious groups nationally and in all states in the post-reform era.
- Kerala's top rank is attributed to its superior performance in providing good health, reducing hunger, achieving gender equality and providing quality education. Himachal Pradesh ranks high in providing clean water and sanitation, in reducing inequalities and preserving mountain ecosystem.
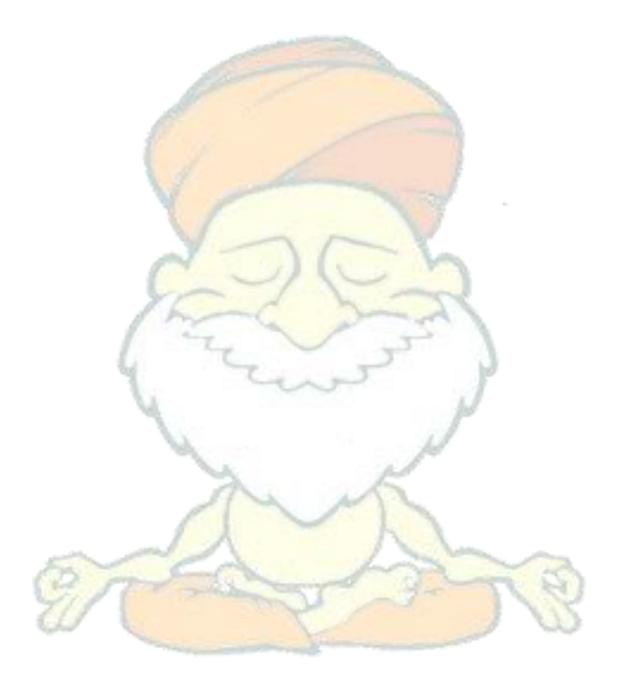
Still there is need to strengthen institutional arrangements by identifying support departments and defining roles and responsibilities let us assess conditions –

- As per Sustainable Development Report 2020 India has been ranked 117th in the index with overall score of 61.92. The score can be depicted as the percentage of SDG achievement.
- While this progress is heartening, there are certain indicators where focussed attention is required. For instance, India's tuberculosis notification rate is still high, thus limiting our overall progress on Goal 3.
- The CAG found deficiencies regarding the adaption of the 2030 Agenda and stressed upon the need to develop a roadmap to be aligned with defined milestones to be achieved in year 2020, 2025 and 2030, which it found has not been attempted yet. The auditor was concerned that the vision document was still under preparation and states did not complete the exercise to prepare policy documents.
- The agency squarely blamed the Union Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation for its failure to finalise the National Indictor Framework (NIF). The delay in approval of NIF held up finalisation of monitoring and reporting framework on implementation of SDG.
- The audit highlighted that three crucial ministries of AYUSH, tribal affairs and home affairs were not involved in the national consultation on transitioning from Millenium Development Goals to SDGs.
- In states, the health spending as a percentage of total expenditure, ranged from 3.29 to 5.32 per cent, which shows that there is a need for considerable augmentation.
- COVID-19 pandemic hit at a time when the SDGs were gaining traction and a significant number of steps have been taken and were making good progress. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruptions to plans and timelines.

Conclusion

India will continue to pursue the implementation of the SDG agenda through close collaboration between the national and sub-national governments as well as active participation of all other relevant stakeholders. Localisation of SDGs is crucial to any

strategy, essentially we need better adapting, planning, implementing and monitoring the SDGs from national to local levels by relevant institutions to achieve goals.

91. What are the components of social security? Discuss. How is India performing on the key indicators of social security? Examine.

Approach

Question is straight forward, candidate can define social security and give account of India's performance with the help of suitable government schemes.

Introduction

According to International Labour Organisation," Social security is the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to health care and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner".

Body

What constitutes social security?

- The principle of Universality of social security is enshrined in various goals related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Right to a Standard of Living- adequate for the health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.
- Right to Income Security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond any person's control.
- In the ILO conventions and UN instruments, it is considered to be a basic human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognises the right to social security for all. It helps the recipients to ensure their rights to family protection and assistance, an adequate standard of living and adequate access to healthcare.
- Social security acts as an umbrella for people during adverse situations. Social welfare is not possible without social security. It acts as a buffer against all odds in the time of need. It helps in lifting millions of people out of poverty and thus, raises people's standard of living.

Types of social security in India
- Gratuity, Old-age pension
- Health and medical insurance
- Maternity benefits
- Disability benefits, Minimum Wages Act

Need of social security in India –

- Majority of Work Force is in Unorganised Sector: The organised sector workers constitute less than 10% of all workers in India.
- The lockdown necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic has caused misery to almost all sections of society, but the vulnerable section viz. people below the poverty line, migrant workers have been affected the most.
- Too Expensive Private Healthcare Expense: Out-of-pocket health expenses, which create barriers to seeking healthcare and can push marginal households into poverty, form as much as nearly 90% of private expenditure on health.
- Covid-19 has highlighted the urgency for providing universal free health care. It has demonstrated that private health care can be afforded only by the wealthy.

Performance of India in social security –
- India has a broad aim of social protection programs, but the overall public expenditure on social protection (excluding public healthcare) is only approx. 1.5% of the GDP, lower than many middle-income countries across the world.
- However, in spite of great attention given to skills development in the last 15 years, the results are not very encouraging.

What can be done?

- Skill Development via 'Learning while Earning' Model-The principle of "learning while earning" should be more vigorously applied to improve India's skill development systems.
- MGNREGA has proved its utility by providing employment to millions of workers who have reverse migrated. Thus, there is a case for extending this programme to urban areas with municipal bodies
- Providing Universal Health Coverage-There is a need to establish the Ayushman Bharat-National Health Agency at all levels of governance for management of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PM-JAY).
- Atal pension yojana- The APY will be focussed on all natives in the unorganized sector, who join the National Pension System (NPS) managed by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) would give protection cover in the terrible occasion of death by any reason/demise or inability because of a mishap.
- The target of raising the share of expenditure on health care to 2.5% of the GDP, as envisaged by the National health policy 2017, in the next two years would be a good beginning.

Conclusion

Covid-19 pandemic exposed our vulnerabilities of social securities. The poor healthcare and social infrastructure needs immediate revamping to provide BASIC right to life to the marginalised and vulnerable.

92. Should the civil servants be made accountable for the recent surge in COVID cases? Critically comment.

Approach

The candidate needs to comment on the aspect of whether civil servants should be held accountable for the recent surge in COVID cases in India and also critically comment on the aspect with proper substantiation.

Introduction

Almost overnight, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has transformed the work and workplaces of the civil servants. Civil servants are playing a leading role in the response to the pandemic. Civil Servants are finding novel ways to design and channel unprecedented economic stimulus spending and manage severe spikes in unemployment.

Body

Recently, India's COVID tally climbed to 1,32,05,926 with a record spike of 1,45,384, according to the Union Health Ministry. There is no clarity on why the numbers are rising so sharply, with a section of people blaming the civil servants for the recent rise. Their arguments can be seen from the following points –

- Civil servants are important actors at the forefront of framing, implementing and evaluating the state's response to the pandemic, and uniquely positioned between the political executive and India's massive frontline state, which necessitates them towards being pro-active in controlling a pandemic.
- There was a lowering of guard and complacency in the approach of executive under civil servants, after the first wave of pandemic subsided. Poor implementation of mask and social distancing norms are a case in point. Allowing of Kumbh Mela in the middle of a pandemic can also point to failure of civil servants as well as executive, where the event risks turning into a super spreader event.
- Civil servants have control over the testing capacity and proactive testing approach would've helped in avoiding this massive surge. Consistently high TPR (Test Positivity Rate) in some states is a clear example of the same.
- Information dissemination by the authorities diminished as compared to last year, when there used to daily/weekly briefings, which helped in creating scientific awareness in media and public. Information regarding vaccines and newer variants, as well as COVID appropriate behavior was not effectively communicated to the larger public.
- Control over vaccine production and distribution is another factor where civil servants played a major role, which saw poor performance. Centralizing tendencies and red tapism led to slow roll out of essential vaccination drive, which would've curtailed the second wave.

At the same time, it is important to remember that the abrupt and brutal disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the public service and civil servants into a frenzy, forcing them to not only deal with fighting its spread but trying to manage its accompanying socioeconomic fallout. Here, the second wave's rapid spread has many other factors, some of which include –

- People not following COVID-19 protocol, including people not continuing with precautions even after being vaccinated, and a sluggish vaccination drive are responsible.
- A new factor is emerging mutants -- both imported and home-grown. Here, the UK strain is considered more virulent and is one of the reason for rapid spread.
- Flaunting of rules and protocols by the political executive, especially in election rallies and religious congregation, which involve huge crowds as well as capacity to spread virus far and wide.
- Population which escaped the first wave of pandemic is one of the reason for present rapid growth as earlier unaffected population provides a fertile ground for the virus and the spread in second wave shows similar pattern.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the civil service's role in India's governance and administration increased further. With most people including politicians staying home for their safety, the health, economic and social crises were handled by collectors/magistrates at the district level, chief secretaries at the states and union territories' level, and empowered groups of secretaries at the national level.

- Further, the Indian state and bureaucracy rose to the occasion and responded well in time of crisis, demonstrating capabilities to mobilise, motivate, innovate and communicate that are unfortunately missing in action in its routine functioning.
- The civil servants felt the autonomy given to them due to lack of political interference in administrative actions, and the consequent ability to deploy all resources to a single cause, enhanced their performance.
- Associations representing officers of central civil services, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), have formed an initiative called 'Caruna' to support and supplement the governments efforts in fighting coronavirus.

Conclusion

In the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, civil servants are working under life-threatening circumstances where they are both expected to deliver services despite the pandemic while at the same time suffering its impact, either by being directly infected or having family members who are. Recognising this fact becomes important as also the fact that civil servants are also the frontline warriors or COVID warriors and people to collaborate and co-ordinate to fight this virus menace to emerge victorious.

93. What are the recent steps announced by the government for improving digital literacy? Discuss.

Approach

The question demands to explain the current measures of transparency in the policy making in the country. The answer should mention about the CBI, CVC, Lokpal and RTI as main parts and also include social audit and CAG as other accountability and transparency measures.

Introduction

Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India in order to ensure the Government's services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. The initiative includes plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. It consists of three core components: the development of secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally, and universal digital literacy.

Body

Digital India was launched by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on 1 July 2015, with an objective of connecting rural areas with high-speed Internet networks and improving digital literacy. The vision of Digital India programme is inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, products, manufacturing and job opportunities. It is centred on three key areas – digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen, governance and services on demand, and digital empowerment of citizens.

- Aadhaar identity platform is one of the key pillars of 'Digital India', wherein every resident of the country is provided with a unique identity or Aadhaar number. The largest biometrics based identification system in the world, Aadhaar is a strategic policy tool for social and financial inclusion, public sector delivery reforms, managing fiscal budgets, increase convenience and promote hassle-free people-centric governance.
- Bharat Broadband Network Limited is a special purpose vehicle set-up under Companies Act by the Government of India with an authorized capital of Rs. 1000 cr. It has been mandated to create the National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN) in India. A total of around 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats spread over 6,600 Blocks and 641 Districts are to be covered by laying incremental fiber.
- The Digital Saksharta Abhiyan or National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Scheme has been formulated to impart IT training to 52.5 lakh persons, including Anganwadi, ASHA workers and authorised ration dealers in all the States/UTs across the country. The initiative aims at training non-IT literate citizens to

become IT literate to enable their active and effective participation in the democratic, developmental process, and enhance their livelihood too.

- DBT was initiated with the aim to reform government delivery system by re-engineering the existing process in welfare schemes for simpler and faster flow of information/funds and to ensure accurate targeting of the beneficiaries, de-duplication and reduction of fraud. DBT will bring efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the Government system and infuse confidence of citizen in the governance. Use of modern technology and IT tools will realize the dream of MAXIMUM GOVERNANCE MINIMUM GOVERNMENT.

- Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) is a plan scheme conceived in the light of experience of a non-plan scheme namely - Common Integrated Police Application (CIPA). CCTNS aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing through adopting of principle of e-Governance and creation of a nationwide networking infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled-state-of-the-art tracking system around 'Investigation of crime and detection of criminals'.

- e-Granthalaya is an Integrated Library Management Software developed by National Informatics Centre, (NIC), Department of Electronics & Information Technology. The application is useful for automation of in-house activities of libraries and to provide various online member services.

- eBiz is being implemented by Infosys Technologies Limited (Infosys) under the guidance and aegis of Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. The focus of eBiz is to improve the business environment in the country by enabling fast and efficient access to Government-to-Business (G2B) services through an online portal.

- National Agriculture Market (NAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee) mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. The NAM Portal provides a single window service for all APMC related information and services. This includes commodity arrivals and prices, buy and sell trade offers and provision to respond to trade offers, among other services.

Conclusion

Several academic scholars have critiqued ICTs in development. Some take issue with technological determinism, the notion that ICTs are a sure-fire antidote to the world's problems. Instead, governments must adjust solutions to the specific political and social context of their nation. Others note that technology amplifies underlying institutional forces, so technology must be accompanied by significant changes in policy and institutions in order to have meaningful impact.

94. What are the current institutional measures for ensuring transparency in policy making? Discuss.

Approach

The question demands to explain the current measures of transparency in the policy making in the country. The answer should mention about the CBI, CVC, Lokpal and RTI as main parts and also include social audit and CAG as other accountability and transparency measures.

Introduction

Transparency and accountability in administration are sine qua non of participatory democracy. Government secrecy fosters disbelief of government on the part of the citizenry and transparency eliminates the wall of secrecy built against the common people by those holding power. Accountability goes beyond the mere responsibility of delivery of a task or service. It also means answerability if a service is not delivered in a timely and efficient manner such that it becomes a burden.

Body

- UNDP describes governance as "a system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and the private sector."
- Transparency is broadly accepted as a major principle of good governance. Transparency allows stakeholders to collect information that may be critical to uncovering abuses and defending their interests. Likewise, transparency increases accountability of the Government officials.
- Transparency means that the criteria, process and systems of decision-making are openly known to all in a public manner. Citizen's charter becomes an important measure for transparency in institutional setup.
- The declaration of Right To Information Act (2015) set the stage for transparency in the functioning of the government and its various agencies. Under this Act, access to information from a public agency has become a statutory right of every citizen.
- Major Initiatives to Enhance Transparency in India include – Right to Information Act, Public Services Bill, Citizens Charters, e-Governance, e-Bhoomi, e-Choupal, e-procurement.
- Transparency is required to make the system of public service delivery effective. However, sheer knowledge of what entitlements are, and who is responsible for fulfilling them, is not sufficient to ensure that public services are passably and effectively delivered to the 'intended' recipients
- The RTI has been seen as a landmark evolvement to empower public on information relating to public authority [under section 2[h]). Its recent expansion by including CJI under its ambit shows its relevance.

- Citizen charters have ensured a way for transparent and citizen centric administration. For instance, on measures of grievance redressal, etc.
- The e – governance have ensured it by- Transparency through online public procurement.
- Delivery of welfare schemes through JDY and thus avoiding leakages and corruption.
- Models like PRAGATI for good and efficient public service and governance system.

Conclusion

There is imperative need to strengthen and widen the national public information infrastructure through developing information networks for wider access of digital information through wider use of information technologies. Changing the mindset of the government employees is important. This will be addressed to organizing programmes for orientation, training and capacity building. States may be advised to establish an independent public grievance redressal authority to deal with complaints of delay, harassment and corruption. Accountability is the complementary function of Transparency. Further, if the system of governance is transparent enough it would promote accountability, transparency and accountability are linked vis-a-vis its mission of an organization where the main objective of achieving public welfare needs to be prioritised.

95. What are the major anthropogenic threats to the Western Ghats? What measures have been taken to protect the ecology of Western Ghats? Discuss.

Approach

Since the question is asking you to discuss so it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion.

Introduction

Running parallel to the West coast of India from the river Tapi in the north to Kanyakumari in the south and covering a total area of 160,000 square kms and traverses through six States viz. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, The Western Ghats, also known as 'Sahyadri', constitute a 1600 km long mountain chain along the west coast of India.

Body

MAJOR ANTHROPOGENIC THREATS TO THE WESTERN GHATS –

The Western Ghats of India is facing severe threats to its ecosystem. In the period between 1920 to 1990, 40 percent of its natural vegetation was depleted. This is coupled with dangers arising from encroachments. The major anthropogenic threats include:

- Large dam projects in Western Ghats have resulted in environmental and social disruption despite cost benefit analyses and environmental impact assessments being done by the government and companies.
- The rise in human settlements has led to the over-exploitation of forest products through activities such as livestock grazing.
- Livestock grazing within and bordering protected areas by high densities of livestock (cattle and goats) is a serious problem causing habitat degradation across the Western Ghats.
- The mining establishments, especially iron-ore mining, have greatly contributed to damaging the ecological balance, by destroying farms, polluting rivers and damaging the top soil.
- Diversion of forests for agriculture, mining and industrial projects, road construction etc over the past few decades have resulted in the state of Kerala losing 9064 sq kms between 1973 and 2016 and Karnataka losing 200 sq km of forest land in the Western Ghats between 2001 and 2017.
- Given that the Western Ghats exists within an intensely human-dominated landscape, human-wildlife conflicts are a common phenomenon.
- Pollution is also playing its part, with high mercury levels in the water, and agrochemicals from tea and coffee plantations going unchecked.

- Plantations owned by private individuals and corporate sector continue to grow in the Western Ghats and constitute an important source of fragmentation of natural habitat.
- The other culprit for loss of native flora in the Western Ghats is the plantation of alien species such as Eucalyptus, Pinus by the British which can be seen across the upper slopes of the Nilgiris interspersed with Lantana Camara. They create a mat-like structure leading to degradation of the land and destruction of the native biodiversity.

MEASURES TO PROTECT THE ECOLOGY OF WESTERN GHATS –

- The government has taken initiative to demarcate Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA.) These areas are not just about regulation of development but are also intimately linked to positive promotion of environment-friendly and socially inclusive development.
- Gadgil committee report recommended declaring the entire WG landscape as Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), divided under three sub-zones, with ban on mining, thermal power plants, polluting industries and large dams, and inclusion of local communities in biodiversity conservation and promoting eco-friendly activities.
- Kasturirangan committee recommended to incentivize green growth that promotes sustainable and equitable development bringing only around 37 per cent Ghats area under the ESA out of the entire 1,64,000 sq km.
- The Central Government tried to bring in three draft notifications for declaring this as Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area (WGESA). However, none of the six state governments have shown any support for this notification.
- Government has taken measures to conserve the fast-declining biological diversity with the establishment of Protected Area network, tiger reserves and biosphere reserves. Nearly 10 per cent of the total area of Western Ghats is currently covered under protected areas.

Conclusion

The Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is one of the eight hot-spots of biological diversity in world, hosts a large proportion of the country's flora and fauna and largely impacts climatic conditions and rainfall patterns in the peninsula. It's our responsibility to protect them from destruction. If we could not do anything for the conservation of Western Ghats right now, then it will be too late to save amazing flora and fauna from the old mountain range.

96. Why is India home to cities having dangerous air pollution levels? What urgent measures would you recommend to address this problem?

Approach

Question is very straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about role of social media platforms in changing societal norms and values and explanation with appropriate use of examples as demanded by the question explicitly.

Introduction

Twenty-one of the world's 30 cities with the worst levels of air pollution are in India, according to data compiled in IQAir AirVisual's 2019 World Air Quality Report; six Indian cities are in the top ten. Indeed, air pollution is pervasive in many parts of India, causing massive public health and environmental crises. The economic cost of fossil fuel air pollution alone is estimated at INR 10,700 billion, or 5.4 percent of the country's annual GDP. An estimated one million deaths each year, and 980,000 pre-term births, are attributed to air pollution from fossil fuel in India.

Body

India has been particularly vulnerable to air pollution over the last two decades, owing to population growth, increasing numbers of vehicles, use of fuels, inefficient transportation systems, poor land use patterns, industrialisation, and ineffective environmental regulations. Among Indian cities, the capital, New Delhi, is one of the worst-affected. New Delhi has the highest ambient particulate matter pollution exposure in the country. As of 2019, the average annual PM 2.5 concentration across India was 58.1 micrograms per cubic meter; Delhi's average PM 2.5 concentration for the year 2019 was 98.6 micrograms per cubic meter. The startling aspect of that statistic is that the recorded level is not just the highest for any capital city in India, but for any capital city in the world.

Reasons for Air Pollution –

- Crop Burning: The national capital territory of Delhi is landlocked between the states of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, and the Himalayas in the north. Much of the air pollution in Delhi is blamed on crop-burning—especially in the states of Punjab and Haryana, where rice and wheat are widely grown. Burning typically peaks during the first week of November, a time when many farmers set fire to leftover rice stalks and straw after harvest, a practice known as stubble or paddy burning, a cost-effective measure for clearing out fields.
- Industrial Pollution: Delhi has the highest cluster of small-scale industries in India. Assessments made by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) show that the national capital is home to and surrounded by highly pollutive

industrial clusters that do not meet limits on air, water or soil emissions. Even the other major cities especially in the Northern India suffer from high Industrial Pollution.

- Vehicular Emissions: The transport sector is the main source of PM2.5 emissions in North Indian cities (28 percent of all PM2.5 emissions). Vehicular contribution also makes up 80 percent of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide in Indian cities' air. Data on vehicular pollution in these cities shows the following: trucks and tractors generate 9 percent of emissions; 7 percent from two-wheelers; 5 percent from three-wheelers; 3 percent each from cars and buses; and 1 percent from light commercial vehicles. In all, these vehicles are responsible for 41 percent of the total pollution load in these major metropolitan cities.
- Also, a lot of the smaller cities have poor waste management, there is a lot of burning, solid fuel use, they are moving from non-motorised to motorised transport. Chulhas [cookstoves], we know, contribute to 25 percent outdoor pollution in India." These stoves also cause pollution indoors, which is especially dangerous for children, according to the WHO.
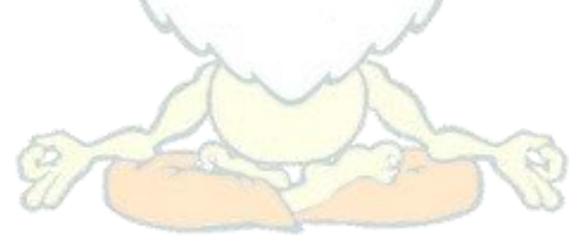
Steps to Address the Pollution –

- Control of ambient particulate matter pollution requires action in several sectors and the linkage of these actions for greatest impact. Various studies have estimated the contribution of different sources to PM pollution in Delhi, which can be useful in informing the efforts that are needed to address these sources. Various government initiatives have been launched in the past few years to reduce air pollution.
- Capacity Building: Public and media discussions on air pollution largely focus on the high ambient PM levels in north India in the winter season and the impacts on people's health. Similar discussions are needed for the longer-term adverse health effects of chronically high pollution levels throughout the year.
- More awareness needs to be created among policymakers and the general public about the slow but substantial impact of ambient particulate matter and household air pollution. Government initiatives to reduce solid fuel use for tackling household air pollution include a scheme initiated by the prime minister in May 2016—the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which aims to provide clean and safe cooking fuel (liquefied petroleum gas) to 50 million low-income households by March 2019. It targeted the addition of 10,000 distributors, increasing access, and covering nearly all the upfront costs of switching for low-income households.
- Another imperative is a viable public transport system strategy. While the Metro has provided massive relief to Delhi's commuters, it is not viable for all economic classes. Therefore, Delhi needs an active bus service that runs on electricity.Regardless of the high initial cost, such vehicles offer other advantages like low maintenance cost, longer service life and lower

operational costs per kilometre. More importantly, they reduce pollution levels.

- Electric mobility is a definitive way towards cleaner air, without compromising functionality. Continuing with the ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles in the same way as in the past would make it difficult to see a satisfactory AQI in Delhi. A shift to electric mobility is long-overdue in Delhi.

Conclusion

The restrictions on non-essential movement in the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant decline in air pollution levels across India. It helped achieve 95 percent of National Clean Air Program targets for 2024 in just 74 days in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, as emissions from the transport, construction and industrial sectors almost stopped and those from power plants reduced significantly. Air pollution, however, is not a one-time, short-term crisis; it is a recurring problem that requires long-term, holistic solutions. If the lockdown showed anything, it is that air pollution levels can be brought down dramatically if India focuses its energy towards a green recovery model that is less emissions-intensive.

In the post-COVID-19 era, the urgency of reviving the economy must not sideline the implementation of NCAP. The key mitigation measures will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and thereby provide opportunities for climate co-benefits. These include transitioning to cleaner fuel for household use that would eradicate household emissions, switching to Bharat Stage VI vehicles and fuels, strict compliance for industrial, power plant and brick kiln emissions, and a sustained programme to stop open crop-waste burning. In the long term, NCAP also needs to be scaled-up in a significant manner to ensure that rapid economic growth and meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are aligned

97. What are the most potent threats to India's marine biodiversity? Discuss. What measures have been taken to protect marine biodiversity? Examine.

Approach

Candidate can explain the threats to marine diversity of India and discuss the various international treaties signed for the same along with the domestic laws and rules.

Introduction

The marine ecosystem is home to the richest and most diverse faunal and floral communities. India has a coastline of 8,118 km, with an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of 2.02 million sq km and a continental shelf area of 468,000 sq km, spread across 10 coastal States and seven Union Territories, including the islands of Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Indian coastal waters are extremely diverse attributing to the geomorphologic and climatic variations along the coast.

Body

Marine biodiversity of India –

- The coastal and marine habitat includes near shore gulf waters creeks tidal flats mud flats coastal dunes mangroves marshes wetlands seaweed and seagrass beds deltaic plains estuaries, lagoons and coral reefs.
- There are four major coral reef areas n India-along the coasts of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands the Lakshadweep group of islands the Gulf of Mannar and the Gulf of Kachchh The Andaman and Nicobar group is the richest in terms of diversity.
- Mangrove ecosystems are found along both the east and west coasts of India covering an estimated area of 4 120 sq km Important mangrove areas are in the Sundarbans, Bhitarkanika Krishna and Godavari delta of Andhra Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Gulf of Kachchh, and the Pichavaram-Vedaranyam area of Tamil Nadu coast.

What are threats to marine biodiversity?

- Sewage: Sewage or polluting substances flow through sewage, rivers, or drainages directly into the ocean.
- Toxic Chemicals From Industries: Industrial waste which is directly discharged into the oceans, results in ocean pollution. Also, they raise the temperature of the ocean and cause thermal pollution. Aquatic animals and plants have difficulty surviving at higher temperatures.
- Land Runoff: Land-based sources (such as agricultural run-off, discharge of nutrients and pesticides and untreated sewage including plastics) account for approximately 80% of marine pollution. The runoff picks up man-made,

harmful contaminants that pollute the ocean, including fertilizers, petroleum, pesticides and other forms of soil contaminants.

- Large Scale Oil Spills: Pollution caused by ships, is a huge source of ocean pollution, the most devastating effect of which is oil spills.
- Ocean Mining: Ocean mining sites drilling for silver, gold, copper, cobalt, and zinc create sulfide deposits up to three and a half thousand meters down into the ocean.
- Plastic Pollution: In 2006, the United Nations Environment Programme estimated that every square mile of ocean contains 46,000 pieces of floating plastic.

What measures have been taken to protect biodiversity?

- The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. The MARPOL Convention was adopted on 2 November 1973 at IMO. It came into force in 1983 after much deliberation.
- Prevention of Marine Pollution is also dealt with by Merchant Shipping Rules, 2009 framed under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
- Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircarft (1972) The Oslo Convention Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources (1974)The Paris Convention.
- Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from LandBased Activities is another initiative and the only global intergovernmental mechanism directly addressing the connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.
- Also in 2015, India ratified the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunker Convention) which ensures adequate, prompt, and effective compensation for damage caused by oil spills.
- Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules 2010 have been framed for the protection of wetlands, in the States. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-System also provides assistance to the States for the management of wetlands including Ramsar sites in the country.

Conclusion

India is gifted with huge marine biodiversity, global threats like climate change adversely affects the marine ecology along with that many types of pollutants present threat to resources. With international efforts, coordinated efforts within states and at national level has to be taken to protect the environment and the livelihood of millions dependent on it.

98. Examine the problem of pollution of water bodies in North India. What measures would you suggest to address this problem?

Approach

Since the question is asking you to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic and understand the topic in detail. Here you are expected to investigate and establish the key facts and issues related to the question.

Introduction

Water pollution is a major environmental issue in India. The largest source of water pollution in India is untreated sewage. The other sources include agricultural runoff and unregulated small-scale industries. Most rivers, lakes and surface water sources in India are polluted but the problem of pollution of water bodies in North India is way more than that of south India.

Body

THE PROBLEM OF POLLUTION OF WATER BODIES IN NORTH INDIA –

- There is a huge gap between the generation and treatment of domestic waste water in North India.
- The problem is not only that North India lacks sufficient water treatment capacity but also that the sewage treatment plants that exist are either not maintained properly or are not in operation.
- The majority of the government-owned sewage treatment plants remain closed most of the time due to improper design or poor maintenance or lack of reliable electricity supply to operate the plant, together with absentee employees and poor management.
- The waste water generated in these areas normally percolates into the soil and evaporates.
- The uncollected waste accumulates in urban areas causing unhygienic conditions and releasing pollutants that leach into surface and ground water basins.
- Rapid growth of population and urbanization in North India during the recent decades has given rise to a number of environmental problems such as water scarcity, wastewater generation and its collection, treatment and disposal.
- Many industries in North India are located on river banks and use the rivers as open sewers for their effluents. The rivers are greatly polluted by such industrial wastes or effluents. All these industrial wastes are toxic to life that consumes this water.
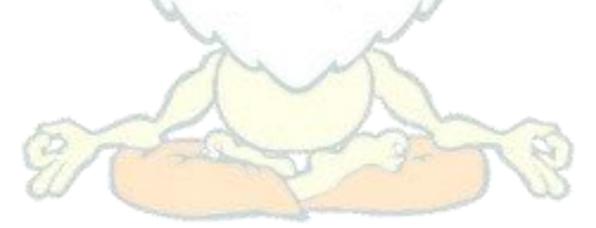
MEASURES TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM –

India is taking several steps to rebalance the quality of its water source, from flocculation and reuse of industrial water to the contributions that local Indian start-ups are making. But there are lessons we need to learn and we have to take similar measures like other states have taken. Examples include –

- In Chennai, a city in Eastern India, industrial water reuse rose from 36000 to 80000 cubic meters in 3 years, from 2016 to 2019.
- VA Tech Wabag, a water company quartered in Chennai, also built numerous water reuse plants all across India.
- n Gujarat, a state of more than 70 million citizens, the government launched its Reuse of Treated Waste Water Policy, which aims to drastically decrease the use of Narmada river, It will install 161 sewage treatment plants all across Gujarat in order for industrial and construction sectors to use the treated water.
- Evaluations offer that in 2015, the Indian government installed almost 16000 reverse osmosis plants in Karnataka and 281 solar electrolytic defluorination plants in Madhya Pradesh.

Conclusion

Around 80% of India's water is severely polluted because people dump raw sewage, silt and garbage into the country's rivers and lakes. This has led to water being undrinkable and the population having to rely on illegal and expensive sources. Water pollution in India has taken away people's lives, especially the lives of children who are particularly vulnerable to waterborne infections. The accomplishments North India has made should not be a stop in its battle with the water crisis, but only the beginning because many still cannot access clean water.

99. How do vaccines create immunity against viral infections? Explain with the help of suitable examples.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to explain how vaccines create immunity against viral infections with the help of suitable examples.

Introduction

Many viruses infect humans and most are controlled satisfactorily by the immune system with limited damage to host tissues. Some viruses, however, do cause overt damage to the host, either in isolated cases or as a reaction that commonly occurs after infection. Vaccines help in combating such viral infections.

Body

- The immune system is a network of cells, tissues and organs that work together to help fight off infection from harmful viruses. When a disease-causing agent, such as virus, invades body, immune system recognises it as harmful and will trigger a response to destroy it.
- One of the ways immune system fights off infection is by creating large proteins known as antibodies. These antibodies act as scouts, hunting down the infectious agent, and marking it for destruction by the immune system.
- Each antibody is specific to the virus that it has detected and will trigger a specific immune response. These specific antibodies will remain in the immune system after the infection has gone. This means that if the same disease is encountered again, immune system has a 'memory' of the disease and is ready to quickly destroy it before a person gets sick.
- Sometimes, however, the immune system doesn't always win this initial battle against the harmful bacteria or virus and people can become very ill or – in extreme cases – die.
- Vaccination is the safest and most common way to gain immunity against a virus that one's body has yet to encounter. Vaccines contain a harmless form of the virus that causes the disease one is being immunised against.
- Vaccines help develop immunity by imitating an infection. This type of infection, however, almost never causes illness, but it does cause the immune system to produce T-lymphocytes and antibodies.
- Sometimes, after getting a vaccine, the imitation infection can cause minor symptoms, such as fever. Such minor symptoms are normal and should be expected as the body builds immunity.
- Once the imitation infection goes away, the body is left with a supply of "memory" T-lymphocytes, as well as B-lymphocytes that will remember how to fight that disease in the future. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to produce T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes after vaccination.
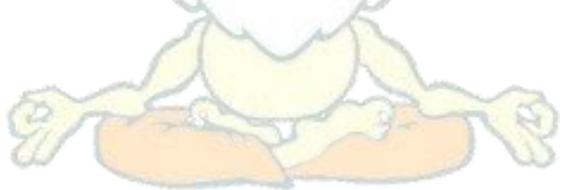
- Therefore, it is possible that a person infected with a disease just before or just after vaccination could develop symptoms and get a disease, because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.
- Scientists take many approaches to developing vaccines. These approaches are based on information about the infections (caused by viruses) the vaccine will prevent, such as how germs infect cells and how the immune system responds to it.

Four types of vaccines are currently available –

- **Live virus vaccines** use the weakened (attenuated) form of the virus. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine and the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine are examples.
- **Killed (inactivated) vaccines** are made from a protein or other small pieces taken from a virus or bacteria.
- **Toxoid vaccines** contain a toxin or chemical made by the bacteria or virus. They make you immune to the harmful effects of the infection, instead of to the infection itself.
- **Biosynthetic vaccines** contain manmade substances that are very similar to pieces of the virus or bacteria. The Hepatitis B vaccine is an example.

Conclusion

Viral diseases have a major impact on the health of all Indians. With the burgeoning population, zoonotic niche that were previously undisturbed are increasingly being encroached by humans. As a consequence, many viral diseases that were previously unheard-of are emerging, while those that were quiescent for decades are re-emerging. Vaccines help in conferring protection against many of these emerging viral diseases.

100. What are the challenges in enforcing model code of conduct during elections? Discuss.

Approach

The student is expected to define MCC shortly and then write down the challenges in enforcing the model code of conduct. He should briefly conclude with a way forward.

Introduction

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a document from the Election Commission of India that lays down the minimum standards of behaviour for political parties and their candidates contesting elections, by defining their dos and don'ts in the electoral battle. It ensures that the party in power doesn't gain an unfair advantage and free and fair elections can be conducted. However, the emergence of social media and other online platforms has posed challenges for the effective implementation of the Model Code of Conduct.

Body

The MCC is not enforceable by law. However, certain provisions of the MCC may be enforced through invoking corresponding provisions in other statutes such as the Indian Penal Code, 1860, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and Representation of the People Act, 1951. The Election Commission has argued against making the MCC legally binding; stating that elections must be completed within a relatively short time (close to 45 days), and judicial proceedings typically take longer, therefore it is not feasible to make it enforceable by law.

On the other hand, in 2013, the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, recommended making the MCC legally binding. In a report on electoral reforms, the Standing Committee observed that most provisions of the MCC are already enforceable through corresponding provisions in other statutes, mentioned above. It recommended that the MCC be made a part of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
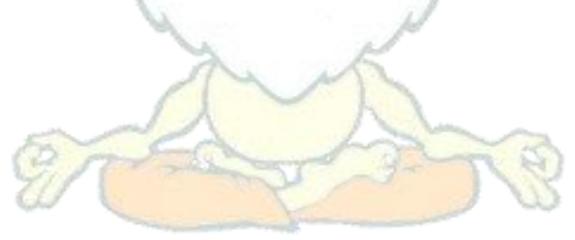
According to the EC, the code states that the party in power — whether at the Centre or in the States — should ensure that it does not use its official position for campaigning. Ministers and other government authorities cannot announce financial grants in any form. No project or scheme which may have the effect of influencing the voter in favour of the party in power can be announced, and Ministers cannot use official machinery for campaign purposes.

- Jurisdiction issues: Digital companies like Facebook are run by companies located overseas. Holding them accountable has been difficult for Indian agencies. EC will face a similar challenge in preventing MCC violations.

- Fake News: Digital media is a potent source of unverified and deliberate fake news. EC lacks resources as well as surveillance capacity to implement and punish the violation of MCC.
- Difficult to Identify Perpetrator: Most of the information during elections is targeted through the algorithm of [online] platforms to push in much more subtle marketing messaging blended with political canvassing,
- Unregulated Nature of Digital Media: All the current measures in place to regulate elections online are being implemented based on voluntary commitments made by online platforms. So, there are no legally binding obligations on, for instance, Facebook or Twitter to take certain actions and there are no penalties prescribed for failing to do so.

Conclusion

In 2015, the Law Commission in its report on Electoral Reforms, noted that the MCC prohibits the issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer in newspapers/media during the election period. However, it observed that since the MCC comes into operation only from the date on which the Commission announces elections, the government can release advertisements prior to the announcement of elections. It noted that this gives an advantage to the ruling party to issue government sponsored advertisements that highlights its achievements, which gives it an undue advantage over other parties and candidates. Therefore, the Commission recommended that a restriction should be imposed on government-sponsored advertisements for up to six months prior to the date of expiry of the House/Assembly. However, it stated that an exception may be carved out for advertisements highlighting the government's poverty alleviation programmes or any health related schemes.

101. Discuss the recent strategies adopted by the government to address the challenge of naxalism.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to discuss the recent strategies adopted by the government to address the challenge of naxalism.

Introduction

Naxalism can be traced backed to its origin in Naxalbari village of West Bengal state. It started as a movement to voice its concerns by landless labourers and tribals and gradually has become an internal security threat to the country. Also, Left Wing Extremism or Naxal Movement has become a source of extreme violence in many parts of the country.

Body

LWE/Naxalism is considered to be the most important internal security concern. These extremists attack the symbols of the country's power such as the police, schools and other government institutions. In this regard, strategies to deal with Naxalism, including the recent one's are –

- Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Division: It was created in the Home Ministry to effectively address the Left Wing Extremist insurgency in a holistic manner. It implements security related schemes aimed at capacity building in the LWE affected States.
- SAMADHAN strategy of government to frame short term and long term policies to tackle LWE. The acronym SAMADHAN stands for Smart leadership, Aggressive strategy, Motivation and training, Actionable intelligence, Dashboard Based KPIs (key performance indicators) and KRAs (key result areas), Harnessing technology, Action plan for each theatre, and No access to financing.
- Government has formulated National Policy and Action Plan adopting multipronged strategy in the areas of security, development, ensuring rights & entitlement of local communities etc. This has several sub-schemes like Security related expenditure scheme(2017-20), Special Central Assistance scheme which involves modernisation of police force, Civic action program which aims at bridging the gap between Police and locals through personal interaction.
- Media Plan: The Maoists have been misguiding and luring the innocent tribals/ local population in LWE affected areas. To deal with their false propaganda, activities like Tribal Youth Exchange programmes organised by NYKS, radio jingles, documentaries, pamphlets etc. are being conducted.
- Aspirational District: The Ministry of Home Affairs has been monitoring Aspirational districts programme in 35 LWE affected districts.

- Modernisation and upgradation of the State Police and their Intelligence apparatus and fortification of Police stations. Further, Improvement in governance and public perception management, Better equipment of CRPF, Setting up of Counter Insurgency and Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) schools, Facilitating inter-State coordination and Assistance in community policing and civic action programmes can help.
- Institutional measures like Blank Panther Combat Force (in line with the Greyhounds of Andhra and Telangana region), Bastariya battalion (locals joining as police, who are well informed of the terrain), multidisciplinary groups under MHA to check funding to the Naxalites.
- Government is aiming for capacity building and skill development of the locals, schemes like ROSHNI that aims at providing jobs to the locals, the Ekalavya model residency schools for better educational facility to tribal children.
- Government is also working on Economic Inclusion, like providing support prices for Minor forest produce (MFP), establishing Van Dhan Kendras to aid tribal income. The Surrender and Rehabilitation policy too, has seen success to some extent

2nd ARC recommendations to overcome red corridor challenges –

- For effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Rights) Act, 2006, multidisciplinary Oversight Committees may be constituted to ensure that the implementation does not adversely affect the local ecosystems.
- Special efforts are needed to monitor the implementation of constitutional and statutory safeguards, development schemes and land reforms initiatives for containing discontent among sections vulnerable to violent left extremism.
- Performance of the States in amending their Panchayati Raj Acts (PESA) and implementing these provisions may be monitored and incentivised by the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- Special anti-extortion and anti-money laundering cell should be established by the State police/State Government. To break the nexus between illegal mining/forest contractors and transporters and extremists which provides the financial support for the extremist movement.

Conclusion

For the holistic last-mile development of "New India", it is necessary to get rid of the menace of such radicalized groups & the synergized efforts of the Centre and the States are crucial in achieving the same where both should continue to follow the two pronged strategy i.e. ensuring safety of the people in the naxal-affected regions as well as taking initiatives for the development of such regions.

102. With the internal security threats emanating from communication networks, what steps can be taken to regulate their misuse without violating the right to privacy and freedom of expression? Discuss.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about internal security threats emanating from the communications networks. And then suggests steps to regulate misuse.

Introduction

In cutthroat competition and rapidly changing technical environment, there is more economic uncertainty and complexities that afflicting the nation. Security is described by experts as ensuring protected communication among computing/communication systems and user applications across public and private networks, is essential for guaranteeing confidentiality, privacy and data/information protection.

Body

Recent issues threats emanating from the communication network –

- Various communication networks are the mainstay of much of the critical infrastructure in many sectors today such as civil aviation, shipping, railways, power, nuclear, oil and gas, finance, banking, IT, law enforcement, intelligence agencies, space, defence, and government networks.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs notification through its Cyber Coordination Center on ZOOM Application after Computer Emergency Response Team's (CERT-IN) raised concerns on video conferencing through the app in lockdown situation once again exposed the threats to the internal security through communication networks.
- The recent digital security breach by a spyware called Pegasus compromised phones of multiple activists, journalists and lawyers in India. The spyware was able to track multiple user applications like messages, emails, audio calls, browser history, contacts including end-to-end encrypted data. The whole incident brought forward the issue of digital security and the ways to achieve it with minimum loopholes.
- With the help of social media, people have started attacking each other's religion on this platform. Sensitive tweets regarding religion are becoming a common phenomenon. Circulation of certain pictures through communication networks also creates a panic among the masses. This is a threat to the internal security of the nation as it disturbs the communal harmony.
- Popular communication networks websites are another means of attracting potential members and followers. These types of virtual communities are growing increasingly popular all over the world, especially among younger

demographics. This can build Anti-national Sentiments among Society. Hackers write or use ready-made computer programs to attack the target computer. By using communication networks hackers breach the national security and steal important data of defence or other strategic sectors. This can kneel the whole country without using Arms and Ammunition.

Steps to regulate misuse without violating the fundamental rights –

- The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp.
- Governments across the world should strengthen their Cybersecurity Framework to deal with the threats posed by dark net. They must cooperate with each other regarding securing the Cyberspaces worldwide through intelligence, information, technology and expertise sharing.
- Real-time intelligence is required for preventing and containing cyber attacks. To achieve that, India needs to secure its computing environment and Internet of Things (IoT) with current tools, patches, updates and best-known methods in a timely manner.
- The need of the hour is to develop core skills in cyber-security, data integrity, and data security fields and setting up of stringent cyber-security standards to protect the institutional infrastructure of the country.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has already taken effective measures to strengthen the national security apparatus and communication and information management systems. All internal security activities should be underpinned by vigorous information management to safeguard the effective use of resources and data assets.
- Nevertheless, security agencies face challenges at every stage of information management such as creation, collection, storage, and communication. To deal with such as challenges, security agencies must develop robust and automated information management and install various protective measures to protect from cyber threats.
- Development of Public Private Partnerships is an important strategy under the National Cyber Security Policy 2013. Pursuant to this aim, under the aforementioned Cyber Swachhta Kendra initiative, antivirus company Quick Heal is providing a free bot removal Tool.

Conclusion

To summarize, internal security organisations in India and around the globe has to undergo unparalleled challenges such as the need to tackle crime, address the increasing challenge of Transnational criminal networks and the ongoing threat of international and domestic terrorism, cybercrime, money laundering, narcoterrorism and human trafficking.

103. Comment on the role played by media and social networking sites during the COVID pandemic.

Approach

Candidate with the help of examples and anecdotes from the current happenings can give the picture of role played by traditional media and social media sites during the pandemic outlining positives and negatives of the platforms.

Introduction

Human beings, from the history of their existence are connected like never before. Globalisation and communication revolution has drastically changed the way information is processed, received and spread. Covid-19 pandemic brought out some of the unique characteristics of this infodemic. Consistent information, misinformation and fake news have permanently changed the way we receive news.

Body

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused social and economic disruptions all around the globe. Moreover, the worrisome situation is not just because of the pandemic but the ease at which fake news has been spreading around it. The World Health Organization (WHO) admitted that humanity is fighting two foes — a pandemic and an "infodemic".

What is infodemic? Infodemic is an overabundance of information that makes it difficult for people to identify truthful and trustworthy sources from false or misleading ones. In the present state of emergency, a barrage of information on the virus has deluged the traditional and social media space.

Role of media and social networking sites during pandemic –

- As the cases of covid-19 is increasing day by day, the load of media to entertain people is also increasing. Here the role of Television and radio is very crucial, as most of the medium is not accessible. They are loaded with dual responsibility is not only entertaining the audience but also providing with relevant and genuine data.
- The initial role of media in this time or anytime is to educate, inform and entertain. And here the credibility arrives, things should be told with facts to avoid further conflict or confusion. It works as breeze between government and general public. Television has robust power to make how we see the world, as it so flexible that could influence the people in a large extent.
- The issues like tablighi jamaat were blown out of proportion by television media by calling it virus jihad. During the pandemic, sense of helplessness and polarisation was created among the sections of society. The role of

television media is to convey the information, with large graphics and loud announcements, media houses declared a kind of apocalypse is here.

- Even today we see glamorisation of poverty and sufferings of common man, media should be sensitive enough to understand the sufferings of patients and their relatives and choose not to go after sensationalization.

Social networking sites –

- Social Media, with its ability to amplify a message through endorsements and forwards, gives one the tool to reach a potential audience without needing substantial resources or access to expensive media technology.
- Social media provides the tools for an information cascade. It enables individuals to distribute large volumes of disinformation or fake news. Today's decision-making is not based on individual rationality but from shared group-level narratives. Social media helps in making the false and misleading narratives of some social miscreants.
- There are rising dangerous conspiracy theories of Covid-19 of being a Bioweapon. A rumour of a lockdown of essential commodities resulted in people hoarding the essential supplies.
- Social media did played positive role as a crucial conduit between families, friends, office, and a medium of entertainment. A reliable way for the victims of this virus to communicate with the outside world.
- In response to Covid-19 pandemic, it gave birth to a fair share of online fundraisers. For example, donations in the PM-CARES fund got encouraged by people sharing this on social media.
- People are also giving money to financially struggling hospitals, as well as individuals at risk of dying from the disease. From plasma to oxygen cylinders, information is disseminated through social media.
- Social media displays and strengthens solidarity against this virus. For example, Indian Prime Minister called for lighting lamps to reinforce the public commitment to fight Covid-19.
- WHO and other public health organizations also use social media to inform the public about the outbreak, and control the panic. It is being used to spread preventive steps that one can take to fight Covid-19. These small changes in behaviours can have enormous consequences.

Conclusion

Traditional media and in particular social media is a two edged sword. Fake information spreads faster than the virus and it mutates with an enormous speed. To immune ourselves from this virus of misinformation we have to take vaccine of optimum use of social media platforms and be informed from the authentic media platforms and not to run after the sensationalization.

104. What are the security challenges posed by emerging technologies like artificial Intelligence and block chain? Discuss.

Approach

Question is straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about the security challenges posed by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain technology also it is important to substantiate with examples as well.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence and block chain are the new disruptive technologies emerging across sectors worldwide Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fast evolving as the go-to technology for companies across the world to personalise experience for individuals. The technology itself is getting better and smarter day by day, allowing more and newer industries to adopt the AI and blockchain for various applications. The rudimentary applications AI include bring smarter chat-bots for customer service, personalising services for individuals, and even placing an AI robot for self-service at banks. Beyond these basic applications, banks can implement the technology for bringing in more efficiency to their back-office and even reduce fraud and security risks.

Body

Security challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence and block chain are as follows –

- Hackers are embracing the machine learning algorithms behind the technology's success to create nuanced attacks personalized for specific individuals. Because AI can be "taught" with data sets, hackers can either create their own programs or manipulate existing systems for malicious purposes. Attacks executed with AI tend to be more successful, perhaps because the technology makes it easier to develop malware with the ability to evade even sophisticated threat detection. For example, pairing polymorphic malware with AI allows these programs to change their code rapidly, making them almost invulnerable to existing cybersecurity systems.
- Massive Data Centres Needed – Achieving the abovementioned objectives, AI requires massive computational capacity, which means more power-hungry data centres and a big carbon footprint.
- Jurisdictional Issues of Data Pooling – Countries are passing stricter legislations on data security (E.g. EUGDPR) that require citizen data to be stored on servers located domestically, picking colder climates beyond their borders is becoming a difficult option.
- The increasing accessibility of facial-recognition technology has also increased concerns with respect to privacy, security, and civil liberties.
- Data immutability has always been one of the biggest disadvantages of the blockchain. It is clear that multiple systems benefit from it including supply

chain, financial systems, and so on. However, if you take how networks work, you should understand that this immutability can only be present if the network nodes are distributed fairly.

- Another problem that it suffers from is the data once written cannot be removed. Every person on the earth has the right to privacy. However, if the same person utilizes a digital platform that runs on blockchain technology, then he will be unable to remove its trace from the system when he doesn't want it there. In simple words, there is no way he can remove his trace, leaving privacy rights into pieces.

- 51% attack is sometimes so critical that the intruders can gain control over the system for sure. Such a network will be affected by double-spending too. The security threat is aggravated by the anonymous nature of this bitcoin system. Anonymity is appreciated, but identifying culprits attempting illicit transactions is difficult here. Less Transparency is a downside of blockchain technology so far.

- In blockchain technology, it is hard to add or modify data once after it is recorded. It is considered as the major disadvantages and advantages of blockchain technology. Considering its downside, the process of data modification needs rewriting codes and indulges in an extensive process. Too much stability can sometimes adversely affect systems. The major disadvantage of blockchain technology here is irreversible records and its demanding modification process.

Conclusion

Blockchain technology and Artificial intelligence has proven itself robust and secure. It ensures integrity of the data and reduces incidents of fraud. The decentralised nature of the blockchain technology applications makes it a perfect fit for many industries to carry out secure business transactions. The proper use of blockchain technology allows us to avoid the use of middlemen or partner platforms in a peer-to-peer network, reduce reception time, fraudulent proof. Similarly Artificial Intelligence has a promising future and has everything for the benefit of humankind if concerns regarding security are alleviated fully.

105. How has organised crime evolved in recent years? How does organised crime manifest itself? Analyse.

Approach

Candidate can define organised crime and with the help of examples and data, outline the recent trends by stating way forward to contain this threat.

Introduction

Organised crime is defined as "those involved, normally working with others, in continuing serious criminal activities for substantial profit, elsewhere". Organised criminals that work together for the duration of a particular criminal activity or activities are what we call an organised crime group.

Body

Organized crime has always existed in India in some form or another. It has, however, assumed its virulent form in modern times due to several socio-economic and political factors and advances in science and technology. Even though rural India is not immune from it, it is essentially an urban phenomenon.

Evolution of organised crime –

- Organized crime networks can be as small as within a locality conducting extortion and could become as large as involving transnational crime syndicates and conducting all kinds of activities ranging to drug trafficking, arms smuggling, terrorism, money laundering, etc.
- The Mumbai underworld, formerly known as the Bombay underworld, refers to the organised crime network in the city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay), in the state of Maharashtra in India. Mumbai is the largest city of India and its financial capital. Over a period of time, the Mumbai underworld has been dominated by several different groups and mobsters.
- Banditry is criminal activity involving robbery by groups of armed bandits. The East India Company established the Thuggee and Dacoity Department in 1830, and the Thuggee and Dacoity Suppression Acts, 1836–1848 were enacted in British India under East India Company rule. Areas with ravines or forests, such as Chambal and Chilapata Forests, were once known for dacoits.
- Several local Indian, Russian, Israeli and Nigerian mafia groups are heavily involved in the organised drug trade in Goa, India's smallest state. Sources reveal that there are also individual players who are British, French, Italian, Portuguese and from other European countries. Some have been visiting the state for over two decades and have their fixed international and local clientele.
- Punjabi mafia refers to the organised criminal gangs in the state of Punjab in India. There has been a spurt in the formation and activities of such criminal

gangs in Punjab over the last decade even though some gangs, associated with those based in Uttar Pradesh, have been operational in the state since the end of militancy in Punjab. Post militancy, they took to contract killings. The real estate and industrial sector boom of the early 2000s saw several criminals surfacing with the primary objective of controlling unions.

Recent trends in organised crime –

- India is a major transit point for heroin from the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent en route to Europe. India is also the world's largest legal grower of opium; experts estimate that 5–10% of the legal opium is converted into illegal heroin, and 8–10% is consumed in high quantities as concentrated liquid.
- The pharmaceutical industry is also responsible for much illegal production of mandrax, much of which is smuggled into South Africa. Diamond smuggling via South Africa is also a major criminal activity, and diamonds are sometimes used to disguise shipments of heroin.
- In the cinema of India, particularly Bollywood, crime films and gangster films inspired by organised crime in India have been produced since 1940. Indian cinema has several genres of such crime films.
- Terrorism is a serious problem which India is facing. Conceptually, terrorism does not fall in the category of organized crime, as the dominant motive behind terrorism is political and/or ideological and not the acquisition of money-power. However, the Indian experience, shows that there is very little difference between criminals and terrorists. There is evidence to suggest that, be it terrorists of J&K, insurgents of the North East or for that matter the Left wing extremists, all are using the methods and tactics of organized crime to raise funds for their organizations.
- The terrorist groups share relations with organized crime at several levels which includes conducting operations for the sole purpose of raising money, seeking assistance from the organized crime networks.
- To summarize, Union of organized crime and terrorism is major menace for international safety and peace. These crimes are growing at rapid rate. It can be concluded from reviewing major facts of these crimes that Organized crime is a rising as international phenomenon and, as it intersects with terrorism, an increasingly dangerous force.

Conclusion

Just as terrorists pool their abilities and resources to achieve synergistic outcomes. Its abolition can be possible only if collaboration is attained at global scale and counter-terrorism programs along with development schemes. To eliminate organised crimes, local level policing needs to be strengthened along with intelligence capacities. Organised crimes are a potential threat to internal security and needs to be dealt with iron fist.

106. Discuss the security challenges posed by insurgent groups. What has been the strategy of the government to tackle them? Examine.

Approach

Since the question is asking you to discuss (you have to use your skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument) the security challenges posed by insurgent groups. After that you have to examine (strategy of the government to tackle them) strategy of the government to tackle them.

Introduction

The Northeast and the Maoist insurgencies have posed major security threats to the Indian state since the 1950s and late 1960s. As per the reports, the 80% reduction in insurgency-related incidents and rise in the number of insurgents giving up arms by over 1600% from 2019 is improvement and a great achievement for the government and security forces because of which, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, has been removed completely from Meghalaya and Tripura and its application has been reduced in Arunachal Pradesh.

Body

THE SECURITY CHALLENGES POSED BY INSURGENT GROUPS –

- That the Indian insurgents can cross the international border and hide in the neighbouring country is not new.
- Since the inception of insurgency in the Northeast in the 1950s, the Naga, Mizo, Meitei, and Assamese insurgents have been crossing over into Myanmar to set up bases, especially in the Chin state and Sagaing Region, where they rest, recoup, train, plan and launch future offensives, and take shelter when pursued by the Indian security forces.
- Besides cross border movement of insurgents, rampant gun running and drug trafficking are other significant security challenges emanating across the India-Myanmar border.
- The Indian insurgent groups have been procuring arms from the black markets of Southeast Asia as well as from Myanmar based rebel group such as the United Wa State Army (UWSA).
- These weapons are often brought in as headloads by the insurgents as well as the local villagers because these headloads are seldom checked by the border guarding forces.
- The narcotics are trafficked into India through the states of Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland from Bhamo, Lashio and Mandalay. For example: Proximity to Myanmar in the 'Golden Triangle' makes the India-Myanmar border vulnerable to trafficking of heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) produced in Myanmar.
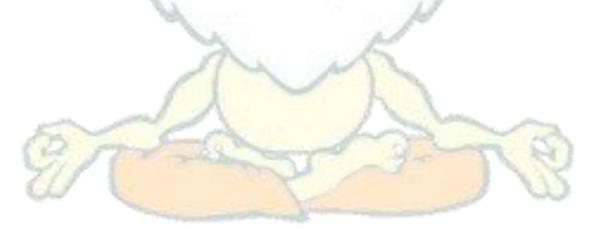
- While the bigger insurgent groups are not directly involved in drug trafficking to generate funds, they do so indirectly by demanding protection money from drug mafia for allowing safe passage to the drug consignments through their area.

THE STRATEGY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE THEM –

- The Indian government's counterinsurgency campaign in Kashmir is effective largely due to the government's use of a massive military response.
- The military has defeated the insurgents' attempts to transition to guerrilla warfare and has forced the insurgency to use terrorism as its main means to gain support among the Kashmiris and the international world,
- The relentless operations by the security forces and proactive government policies have laid the foundation for tackling insurgency issues.
- Favourable external environment with Myanmar and Bangladesh has struck at the roots of the insurgent organizations in north east as well.

Conclusion

The internal security problems should not be treated as merely law and order problems. They have to be dealt with comprehensively in all their dimensions and at all levels — political, economic and social. They are all interlinked. At times, the required measures will conflict with each other. Going too far in one direction could be counter-productive. The security requirements have to be met, but that does not mean giving the security agencies a free hand. Striking the right balance is the key to success in meeting these challenges effectively. We need a comprehensive security policy that will be implemented effectively at all levels.

107. Discuss the recent efforts undertaken by the government to address the security Challenges in border regions?

Approach

Question is very straight forwarded in its approach students are expected to discuss about the recent efforts taken by the government to address the security challenges in the border regions also it is important to mention the programs in this direction as well.

Introduction

The border security scenario in India is marked by many threats, with different sectors of the border posing different challenges and complexities. The threats to India are arguably increasing, with principal threats coming from Pakistan, Bangladesh and China, and noteworthy threats from Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan. The Pakistan border sees cross-border terrorism and movement of armed militants and smuggling of goods and narcotics, while along the Bangladesh border, illegal immigration and smuggling have been the main concern. The China border sees fairly regular armed intrusions, and has recently been in the news due to the Doklam crisis that raised suspicions that China may have some concealed their goals in the border region.

Body

Efforts to address the security challenges in the border regions –

- The pace of border security projects in India has accelerated over the past two years. A prime example of this has been the implementation of a Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) pilot project along two 5.5 km and 5.3 km stretches of the International Boundary (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Theoretically, CIBMS a robust system that works by integrating human resources, weapons, and high-tech surveillance equipment. Following Pathankot terrorist attack, MHA sanctioned implementation Comprehensive Management System (CIBMS) to establish an integrated security system at borders providing all round security even in adverse climatic conditions.
- Border Security Forces (BSF) obtained hi-tech systems such as Hand Held Thermal Imagery (HHTI) systems, Long Range Reconnaissance Observation Systems (LORROS), and Battle Field Surveillance Radars (BFSR) that greatly enhanced the detection ability of BSF personnel.
- Creating infrastructure: India is also constructing some critical bridges to cut down time for troop movement such as Dhola – Sadiya Bridge.
- India has joined hands with Japan to aggressively develop infrastructure projects in North east to contain China.

- To expedite border road construction, Ministry of Defence has decided to delegate administrative and financial powers to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- A crime-free stretch has been established between the BSF border posts at Gunarmath and Kalyani and the BGB (Border Guards Bangladesh) border posts at Putkhali and Daulatpur.
- Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) – aims to synergize the efforts of both the Border Guarding Forces for checking cross border illegal activities and crimes as well as for maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the India-Bangladesh border.
- 13 new Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) to encourage India's engagement with SAARC countries along with Thailand and Myanmar. ICP is able to interdict such elements while facilitating legitimate trade and commerce.
- Development of border areas has been a matter of concern for the country. The Border Area Development Programme (BADP) was initiated in western region, which at that point of time was the most volatile border, during the Seventh Five Year Plan period forpromotion of wellbeing and a sense of security among the border population. The development of border areas is now viewed as a part of the comprehensive approach to the Border Management, which focuses on socio-economic development of the people and promotion of wellbeing and a security environment in the border areas.
- Our navy has interdicted Chinese maritime research and survey vessels that entered our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf (CS) without our prior consent in 2018 and 2019. India has legislation that requires foreign marine scientific vessels to seek licence prior to undertaking activities. This will need coordination between our national security agencies, the navy, and the government departments responsible for the marine environment and disaster management, but also collaboration with like-minded countries who share our concerns. Such cooperation includes, inter alia, deepening of real-time information exchange, co-development and deployment of UDA monitoring devices and joint processing of acoustic signatures, and closer coordination in the patrolling of sea lanes to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Conclusion

India has a land border of over 15,000 kms, which it shares with seven countries (Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Afghanistan). In the Indian case, borders are quite complex and almost every type of extreme geography is present at different borders viz. deserts, fertile lands, swampy marshes or tropical evergreen jungles. There is cross border smuggling, the problem of drugs, cattle, humans, artefacts, fake Indian currency note (FICN), etc. The stability of country brings the full utilization of Human resource potential of the country and brings the economic development and peace and prosperity in the country so, border management is a key issue for whole round development of country. In order to ensure that strict vigil and infrastructure development is needed in the border areas.

108. Discuss the locational factors for the pharmaceutical industry. Examine the challenges posed to the pharmaceutical sector during the COVID pandemic.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about location factors related to pharmaceutical industry explain with Indian examples. Also examine the challenges posed to the pharmaceutical sector during COVID pandemic.

Introduction

India is the largest provider of generic drugs globally. Indian pharmaceutical sector supplies over 50% of global demand for various vaccines, 40% of generic demand in the US and 25% of all medicine in the UK. India enjoys an important position in the global pharmaceuticals sector.

Body

Pharmaceutical industry: The pharmaceutical industry discovers, develops, produces, and markets drugs or pharmaceutical drugs for use as medications to be administered (or self-administered) to patients, with the aim to cure them, vaccinate them, or alleviate the symptoms. Location factors for the pharmaceutical industry –

- Supply of labour: Labour is one of the most important inputs in any industrial enterprise. India has a regular and cheap supply of labour, specifically the skilled labour. Also, as there is adequate supply of local labour/unskilled labour, then naturally it will be available at cheaper rates.
- Suitability of land and climate: Climatic conditions viz humidity, temperature and other atmospheric conditions are favourable for the pharma industry. For example, humid atmosphere is not suitable for the formation of pharmaceuticals.
- Stable growth in domestic market consumption: Despite recent headwinds, the Pharmaceutical industry in India has grown rapidly. India is likely to become one of the top 3 Pharmaceutical industries by 2030.
- Large pool of scientists and engineers with a potential to steer the industry ahead to greater heights. Presently, over 80% of the antiretroviral drugs used globally to combat AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) are supplied by Indian pharmaceutical firms.
- And within India, if there is one destination that all of them are making a beeline for it is Hyderabad. The city has the capacity to churn out well over a third of the global vaccine supply. Be it India's first indigenous Covid-19 vaccine candidate Covaxin or Russia's Sputnik V, Johnson & Johnson's Ad26. Cov2.S, FluGen's CoroFlu or even Sanofi's under development vaccine candidates, all have a Hyderabad connect.

- Whether a successful Covid-19 vaccine is developed in India or not, a vaccine developed anywhere in the world will be churned out of Hyderabad and Pune.
- The city-based pharma companies are actively involved in manufacturing lifesaving Covid-19 drugs including Remdesivir, Hydroxychloroquine, Favipiravir, etc Three more pharma companies from Hyderabad are actively engaged in the efforts to develop and manufacture Covid-19 vaccine.
- One of the first ICMR approved RT-PCR kits in India was from Hyderabad and Pune since then, a number of companies have developed PCR kits, rapid test kits, viral transport mediums, reagents, tech-based diagnostics solutions etc.
- There is no doubt that Hyderabad and Pune has played a critical role in the Indian pharmaceutical revolution which made the country not only self-sufficient in the medicine manufacture but also made it as the pharmacy capital of the world.

Challenges to the pharmaceutical industry in COVID pandemic –

- Disrupted Supply Chain: Over the globe, supply chains have been broken, disrupted, and some have even come to a grinding halt because of the nation-wide lockdowns, closed borders, and halted air travel.
- Need for Agility and Transparency: With the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been immense interest in the Pharma sector's workings by almost all social hierarchies. There is an increased need for faster, accurate, and transparent operations across the board.
- Workforce optimisation and Controls: During COVID-19, Pharma manufacturing companies made many adjustments to modus operandi. That includes accommodating remote workforce, social distancing when in person, wearing masks and gloves, and avoiding any possibility of spreading the coronavirus.
- Humongous Data Collation and Analysis: The research and clinical trials for potential drug treatments and vaccines for coronavirus worldwide generate unprecedented amounts of data and information. Paramedical experts and scientists in the Pharma industry look at agile tools to collate and manage data while generating insights.

Conclusion

While these changes and concerns are bound to affect the pharmaceutical industry's workings, proper management, technology, and software to navigate these challenging times will enable the pharmaceutical sector to rise to the occasion. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought forward existing and new challenges for the Pharma sector. However, it has given a chance to create opportunities and get transformations that can have a positive impact on the pharmaceutical industry.

109. Discuss the challenges being faced by India's civil aviation sector. What measures have been taken recently to address those? Discuss.

Approach

Candidate can give brief facts about aviation industry and its potential in the introduction and state challenges faced by the sector. With the help of new government schemes and initiatives, way ahead can be given.

Introduction

The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in the country during the last three years. India has become the third largest domestic aviation market in the world and is expected to overtake UK to become the third largest air passenger market by 2024.

Body

Size of Indian aviation industry –

- India had the world's third-largest civil aviation market in 2017, with the number of passengers growing at an average annual rate of 16.3% between 2000 and 2015. It recorded an air traffic of 131 million passengers in 2016. Despite this growth, much of the country's aviation potential remains untapped.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation is responsible for civilian aviation, through regulatory oversight by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Challenges faced by the sector –

- Paramount amongst all issues is the one of air safety. In the past few years, there have been a number of fatal accidents snuffing out hundreds of innocent lives. Many of these accidents could have been avoided if as the planners, managers and regulators had a better understanding of the dynamics of the man-machine interface.
- The airspace in India is going to see an increase in the number of aircraft flying. Hence, flying operations, air space management, arrivals and departures at airports, must be made more efficient for safe operations.
- The next most important issue is one of finance. We at times are hesitant to acknowledge that financial viability is essential for all concerned. Once this is accepted, optimisation of resources will become the normal way of life, as would competence and efficiency.
- Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) is one of the important sections of the industry. Indian government didn't not reduce the jet fuel prices in proportion to the fall in international crude oil prices. But, when there is a rise in crude prices,

it increases in the fuel cost would eventually increase the operation of the airline.

- Frequent government intervention is proving to a great obstacle for the growth of Aviation industry. Several aviation experts have pointed out that India government should follows aviation industry free from policy hurdles like regulating airfares and slash taxes, including jet fuel.
- High Airport (aeronautical) Charges levied by Airport Authority of India are higher. These charges payable at the International airports are higher than those payable at the airports designated as Domestic airports. As a result, the domestic airlines in India are incurring additional costs at the international designated airports without deriving any extra facilities.
- There is a cut throat competition faced by the top airline due to ticket pricing. Established Airlines are threatened by low cost carriers, which are eating up their market share.

Measures taken to address these issues –

- There is a need to complete the ongoing projects under the UDAN initiative in a time-bound manner. In addition, the existing capacity of international airports should be augmented under the International UDAN initiative.
- Government intention to make India a global hub for Aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) services will result in saving costs and creating liquidity for airline companies.
- National Civil Aviation Policy 2016 and National Civil Aviation programme 2018 can help India to become a major civil aviation market in the world.
- The development of more airports under the PPP model with a view to improving the aviation infrastructure without the government having to pump in additional funds.
- With 100% FDI allowed under automatic route, aviation sector is likely to witness US$15 billion worth of investment in the next five years.
- New airports like Jewar Airport in Uttar Pradesh are being built under the NABH Nirman initiative based on (1) fair and equitable land acquisition, (2) long-term master plan for airport and regional development and (3) balanced economics for all stakeholders. This leads to growth in housing and real estate sector, construction, building materials, tourism, etc.
- With a new terms and conditions to divest Air India, government is trying to give positive signal making level playing field for small players.

Conclusion

Pandemic brought the aviation sector worldwide to a standstill. Industry witnessed many big players filing for bankruptcy after hitting a blow. Indian aviation sector is still booming and is expected to be third largest in the world by 2024. India needs relaxation in some harsh regulatory measures and liberalisation policy for exit of an airline. With more private sector investment, tier II and tier III cities will also see new infrastructure development as envisaged in civil aviation policy of 2016.

110. With the help of suitable examples, discuss the evolving global trends for the location of tertiary sector?

Approach

Question is straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about evolving global trends for the location of tertiary sector with suitable examples.

Introduction

Industrial locations are complex in nature. These are influenced by the availability of many factors. Some of them are: raw material, land, water, labour, capital, power, transport, and market. Tertiary sector refers to the commercial services that support the production and distribution process, e.g. insurance, transport, advertising, warehousing and other services such as teaching and health care. The chain of production shows interdependence: firms rely on other businesses in different sectors for raw materials, components or distribution.

Body

Evolving trends for the location of tertiary sector –

- Tertiary sector was mainly focussed on Information technology and other services industries like transportation etc. location of the same industries was mainly based on availability of cheap and skilled labour through business process outsourcing e.g. in India Information Technology reached to its peak through the process of business outsourcing.
- Outsourcing has witnessed a massive boom over the past few decades, with the number of service providing companies increasing every year. The year 2018 is going to be no different when it comes to keeping up with this exponential growth in the outsourcing trend. IT outsourcing trends, this year, have seen a constant growth and this trend will continue to grow in the coming years.
- Technological advancement will become a main factor in the location of tertiary sector in coming times. Robotic process automation and intelligent automation will continue to flourish in the coming years. This is expected to disrupt the existing commercial outsourcing model and drive down costs considerably, resulting in supplier margin expansion. Furthermore, enterprise buyers will also have opportunities to save more, as the supplier margins expand.
- With the use of self-service tools and automated chat-bots becoming highly prevalent among many companies, the demand for call centers is expected to decrease drastically. As virtual agents can work on numerous clients at the same time, these automated contact centers will be able to handle higher volumes with less number of agents. Therefore, we will see various tech-

enabled contact centers replacing the traditional call centers, few years down the line.

- Companies are expected to look out for service providers who add value to their business rather than those who just provide services at lower costs. Therefore, outsourcing companies will partner with service providers who offer innovative services, equipped with best infrastructure and thorough industry knowledge. This will become a disrupting factor in the already existing pattern of location of tertiary sector.

- With covid-19 pandemic making a broad based change Telecommuting is one trend which has changed the way outsourcing companies operate over the years and this trend is here to stay. Companies find it very easy to interact with other team members and integrate seamlessly through remote meetings and use different types of real-time monitoring tools to deliver quality services.

- Analysts are predicting that the industry will continue to fight short-term cost pressures, and that there will be pressure on service providers for more flexible pricing contracts. Many small alliances, focused on increased operational efficiencies, better quality control and reduced back office costs, are being set up. This trend is going to continue.

- Brazil and Russia will make their presence felt in the global outsourcing market and China will continue to move ahead.

Conclusion

India continues to be the major destination for outsourcing because it has been able to evolve with changing needs. NASSCOM, (National Association of Software & Service Companies) the apex body of India's premier IT software and service (IT & BPO) companies, reported that India's share in the global outsourcing market rose from 51% in 2009 to 55% in 2010. India still stands out for its customer service and efficiency, so its future is bright. Today, customers are not only looking at cost-effective solutions for their outsourced business but also for skilled staff, enhanced productivity, service quality and business process excellence. India, with its large population and multiple-skilled people, would continue to be preferred for both back-end and front-end outsourcing.

111. Is it the duty of the state to provide free vaccination to the population? Comment in the light of the ongoing debate over COVID vaccines.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about vaccination, analyse whether state must provide free vaccinations. Also comment on ongoing debate over COVID vaccine.
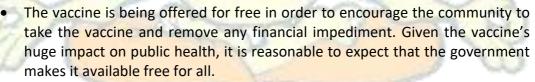
Introduction

The Prime Minister of India said that India is entering a decisive phase of vaccination in the fight against COVID-19, with the approval of two made-in-India COVID-19 vaccines. The PM has also said that two vaccines are more cost-effective than any other in the world and that India's vaccine production & delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting this crisis.

Body

Duty of state to provide free vaccination –

- In the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe, vaccines are likely to be entirely free and administered publicly. However, given the tight fiscal situation, the Indian government faces the dilemma of whether to finance vaccinations publicly or privately.
- The government provided free vaccines to most prioritised beneficiaries including 1 crore healthcare and 2 crore frontline workers, in the first phase of covid-19 vaccination.
- Vaccinating everyone above 18 in the phase III of the inoculation drive will cost only about 0.36 per cent of the GDP, ratings agency India Ratings and Research said.
- In a move to boost the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination programme in the country, Finance Minister announced that Rs 35,000 crore (4.7 billion USD) will be provided towards the vaccines. However, it is unclear whether the vaccines will be provided free of cost to all citizens.
- The vaccine is being offered for free in order to encourage the community to take the vaccine and remove any financial impediment. Given the vaccine's huge impact on public health, it is reasonable to expect that the government makes it available free for all.
- While a free vaccine sounds appealing and should indeed be a government's prerogative in a pandemic, there are other responsibilities that also need to be taken care of India is staring at a zero or even negative growth rate through 2020.
- Lockdowns and slew of social distancing measures have also accelerated job losses, with CMIE reporting a loss of over 6 million jobs. Another fiscal stimulus is warranted and even recommended by IMF, with a focus on support for vulnerable groups, and support for businesses.

- While the option of doling out a free vaccine remains with the government, this promise cannot be made in a silo. Enough doses of any vaccine will not be immediately available and vaccination would require prioritisation of recipients.
- Last mile delivery of vaccines has to be assured and will require investment. Post-market monitoring of vaccine performance has to be designed to quickly respond to any adverse events.

Current scenario –

- The Centre during the first three phases procured the entire quantity of vaccines from the manufacturers Covishield and Covaxin and distributed it to states. During the initial three phases, healthcare workers, frontline workers, and those above the age of 45 were vaccinated.
- Now India is all set to begin its third phase of vaccination drive from May 1, including everyone aged 18 and older. The fourth phase, however, will incorporate several changes in vaccine policy. The many state government has decided to give Covid-19 vaccine free of cost to all those aged 18 and above in government centres.

Conclusion

Vaccine manufacturers have to be incentivised to ramp up vaccine supply to stay apace with vaccine demand. A free vaccine promise by itself is futile, unless accompanied by a transparent and evidence-based vaccine deployment plan. Therefore, instead of playing on people's fears, we need a transparent vaccination strategy, continued insistence on social distancing measures and monetary support for those vulnerable.