



IAS PARLIAMENT

Information is Empowering

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative



MONTHLY MAINSTORMING

APRIL
2022

A compilation of Mains questions with model answers, from Current Affairs of the month



SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD

iasparliament.com

INDEX

MONTHLY MAINSTORMING	3
APRIL 2022	3
G.S PAPER I	3
1. <i>Society</i>	3
G.S. PAPER - II	5
2. <i>Polity</i>	5
3. <i>Judiciary</i>	7
4. <i>Governance</i>	8
5. <i>Government Policies</i>	8
6. <i>Health</i>	13
7. <i>Education</i>	15
8. <i>International Relations</i>	16
G.S. PAPER - III	19
9. <i>Economy</i>	19
10. <i>Agriculture</i>	23
11. <i>Energy</i>	23
12. <i>S & T</i>	25
13. <i>Internal Security</i>	27
14. <i>Environment</i>	27

MONTHLY MAINSTORMING

APRIL 2022

G.S PAPER I

1. SOCIETY

The government should also step in to improve the implementation of existing laws and increase budgetary provisions for workplace safety. Explain

KEY POINTS

- The Female Labour Force Participation Rate, already low in India, received a further setback with the pandemic.
- In understanding the all-time low female labour force participation rate, there is a need to factor in a longstanding problem the safety of women in workplaces.
- A recent study by Oxfam India on tea plantation workers reveals that the extremely hierarchical nature of their jobs, the migrant status of workers and the lack of other job opportunities for women tea pluckers contribute to the normalisation of workplace violence.
- An effective body for this purpose could have been the Local Complaints Committee structure under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, But such bodies are almost non-functional.
- Some measures that can be implemented immediately include sensitising informal sector workers on gender-based violence and informing them in simple language about the laws that deal with such violence;
- Employers must ensure that complaints committees are functional; sensitizing local labour contractors on how to deal with cases of sexual harassment at workplaces.
- These bare minimum measures can be implemented with technical support from local women's rights organisations. The government should also step in to improve the implementation of existing laws and increase budgetary provisions for workplace safety.

It is crucial to address the differential financial needs of women to expand rural entrepreneurship and employment. Substantiate

KEY POINTS

- Banking should be simple and based on mutual trust. Banks should spend time overhauling their operations, be it for application of a small loan or a more complicated product like micro-insurance or pension.
- The National Family Health Survey Round 5 (2019-2020) reveals that 77.4 per cent of rural women have a saving bank account.
- In rural areas, the loan rejection rate for women-owned enterprises is 2.5 times higher than for men.

- Their accessibility to mobile phones is 20 per cent less than that of men, and as for the Internet, is it 50 per cent lower.
- Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank, Pune, a women driven co-operative bank, has been providing small advances for women who have different cash-flow and livelihood patterns.
- Mann Deshi and SEWA Shakari, as women led co-operative banks, have converted financial inclusion into a strong and profitable business proposition, meeting an array of financial needs of rural women and their families through structured, well-designed products.
- It is crucial to cater to the differential financial needs of women to expand rural entrepreneurship and employment. This calls for gender disaggregated data, a larger number of women business correspondents, enhanced digital inclusion.

Remembering unsung women heroes and their stories of struggle can address the issue of institutionalised discrimination in the country. Discuss

KEY POINT

- Every section of society attempted to combine social and political liberation during the freedom struggle. Kuyili, who commanded the army of Velu Nachiyar, the queen of Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu, woman who fought against the British around 1780.
- Jhalkaribai, another fearless warrior, played a pivotal role in what is known as the First War of Independence in 1857, as the most trusted companion and advisor of Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi.
- Among social reformers, there was Savitribai Phule, a pioneer in education for Dalits, who started a school in 1848 with nine girls.
- By 1851 this became three schools with around 150 girl students. She also started a school in 1849 with her friend Fatima Sheikh, the Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852 to raise awareness about women's rights and the Balahatya Pratibandhak Griha, where widows and rape survivors could deliver their babies.
- Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar fought against the exploitative Devadasi system. In 1936, she published a Tamil novel on Devadasis and wrote the fictional series Damayanthi in 1945.
- Marathi writers like Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon worked to make Dalit women visible in women's movement and, through their research and testimonies, brought out the grim reality of the missing voices.

G.S. PAPER - II

2. POLITY

Assam-Meghalaya border accord would be a signal to all States to resolve their border disputes peacefully. Explain

KEY POINTS

- The agreement between Assam and Meghalaya to end their boundary dispute in six of the 12 areas, where discord persisted, is a welcome first step.
- By adopting a give-and-take approach, the two States have demonstrated that knotty boundary issues can be resolved in this case, partially to begin with if there is a will to arrive at an agreement.
- Of the disputed territory a little over 36 square kilometres the two States will get a near equal share, enshrining the sharing principle that might serve as a template to resolve other boundary disputes in the northeast.
- The agreement requires delineation and demarcation by the Survey of India as well as parliamentary approval.
- In 2021, five policemen and a civilian from Assam were shot dead in violent clashes with their Mizo counterparts at a disputed point between Assam and Mizoram.
- It is imperative that Assam and the other States locked in dispute use goodwill and the good offices of the Centre.
- Rather than entrusting security to paramilitary forces, one confidence-building measure could be to deploy State police without arms wherever possible. It would be a signal that all States are committed to resolving their disputes peacefully.

Should the demand for full repeal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act be considered? Comment

KEY POINTS

- In what is clearly a nod to the vociferous demand for the repeal of the unpopular Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from several States in the northeast, especially after 13 civilians were killed in Mon district in Nagaland .
- In Nagaland, while AFSPA was removed from the jurisdiction of 15 police stations in seven districts, it remains in place in 57 police stations in 13 districts.
- In Manipur, on the other hand, only 15 police station areas in six districts have been excluded from the disturbed area notification, and the Act is still in force.

- Despite the vociferous protests from security forces for the retention of the Act, human rights organisations, sections of civil society and committees including the five-member committee led by retired Supreme Court judge B.P. Jeevan Reddy in 2005, have steadfastly called for its repeal.
- The Supreme Court-appointed Justice N. Santosh Hegde committee, in 2013, which investigated “encounter” killings in Manipur, suggested that the Act must be properly reviewed every six months.
- In 2016, the Supreme Court had also ruled that the armed forces could not be immune from investigation for excesses committed during the discharge of their duties even in “disturbed areas”.

The audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India highlighted the various loopholes present in the functioning of Unique Identification Authority of India. Analyse

KEY POINTS

- The recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on the UIDAI is somewhat of a landmark.
- The report is a scathing indictment of the way the project is run, and it confirms the apprehensions that were taken to court.
- It is not possible to ensure if all those on the UID database are even ‘residents’. A ‘resident’ has to have been in the country for at least 182 days in the 12 months preceding enrolment.
- UIDAI could not provide Regional Office-wise data because, they said, “such data was not available to them.” Instances of “issue of Aadhaars with the same biometric data to different residents” were reported.
- UIDAI also stated that as per the approved procedure for enrolment, operators could complete the enrolment even with poor quality biometrics through “forced capture” after four unsuccessful attempts to capture biometric data.
- When the challenge to the UID project was still in court, disturbing reports of deaths due to hunger had begun to emerge. Some of them were attributable to biometric problems.
- UIDAI cannot provide authentication failure rates at the state level since it does not track location of the authentication transactions.
- The UIDAI, however, took the burden off their shoulders, passing it on to requesting entities (who) are obliged under the law to provide for exception handling mechanisms.

Is there a need to consider about new criminal and penal provisions to combat hate speech? Comment

KEY POINTS

- The value of proactive judicial intervention cannot be understated. After the Supreme Court called for “corrective measures” against the peddling of communal hate from supposedly religious platforms.
- At a time when communally motivated gatherings are becoming conspicuous in their frequency and vociferous in their fulminations against minorities, one would have expected the police to be more sensitive to the situation and prevent hate speeches.

- Even after obtaining bail, under a condition that he would not make any provocative speeches, he had participated in a similar event in Delhi.
- Instances of controversial religious figures making unacceptable comments at different places and occasions have emerged as a disturbing pattern, one that the Court may have to arrest by stern action.
- The possible damage to the social fabric is incalculable, as the language of hatred may seep into the public consciousness as an acceptable thought process.
- The Supreme Court has recognised the potential for a wider societal impact beyond the distress caused to individual members of the targeted group.
- In cases relating to lynching and ‘khap panchayats’, the Court laid down guidelines on preventive, remedial and punitive measures.
- While these are to be followed without exceptions, there is also a need for considering new criminal and penal provisions to combat hate speech.

3. JUDICIARY

The judiciary needs to challenge the electoral bonds scheme for free and fair elections in the country. Comment

KEY POINTS

- India’s apex court will hear the petitions challenging the electoral bonds scheme. Two prominent non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India – Common Cause and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) – have legally challenged the scheme that was started in 2018.
- The electoral bonds scheme was first mentioned in 2017 when then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented it as a way to reform electoral funding in the country.
- Until then, most political parties used to bypass scrutiny of their finances by claiming that they received most of their donations in cash.
- Further, since cash amounts less than Rs 20,000 were exempted from scrutiny, parties routinely claimed that most of the donations they received were in cash and in amounts less than Rs 20,000.
- This advantage with the ruling party allows the possibility for the government of the day to either extort money or victimise those individuals/ entities that fund the Opposition.
- Another key area of concern is that the government, as part of the introduction of the electoral bonds, had removed the cap on how much money a company could donate.
- A quick closure in these matters is necessary to ensure transparency in campaign financing, critical to the integrity of the electoral process.

4. GOVERNANCE

An independent umbrella body that brings the various investigative agencies under one roof holds the key to shoring up their credibility in the country. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- The police and investigative agencies may have de-facto legitimacy, but as institutions, they are yet to gain social legitimacy. Police should work impartially and focus on crime prevention.
- Lack of infrastructure, lack of sufficient manpower, inhuman conditions, especially at the lowest rung, lack of modern equipment, questionable methods of procuring evidence, officers failing to abide by the rule book and the lack of accountability of erring officers.
- There is an immediate requirement for the creation of an independent umbrella institution, so as to bring various agencies like the CBI, SFIO, and ED under one roof.
- This body is required to be created under a statute, clearly defining its powers, functions and jurisdictions. Such a law will also lead to much-needed legislative oversight.
- A provision in the proposed law for an annual audit of the performance of the institution by the appointing committee will be a reasonable check and balance.
- An issue that needs addressing at this stage is the representation of women in the criminal justice system. Often, women feel deterred in reporting certain offences due to a lack of representation.
- Relations between the community and police also need to be fixed. This is only possible if police training includes sensitisation workshops and interactions to inspire public confidence.

5. GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Do you think that the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill 2022 erodes the privacy of those convicted of crime and the ordinary citizen? Comment

KEY POINTS

- The Bill aims to replace the Identification of Prisoners Act 1920 that has been in need of amendment for several decades.
- At present there are extensive facial recognition technology programmes for “smart policing” that are deployed all across the country.
- Such experimental technologies cause mass surveillance and are prone to bias, impacting the fundamental rights of the most vulnerable in India.
- The existing law permits data capture by police and prison officers either from persons convicted or persons arrested for commission of offences punishable with a minimum of one year’s imprisonment.
- The law removes the existing albeit minimal limitation on persons whose measurements could be taken. It is poised to be expanded to all persons who are placed under arrest in a case.

- This is a truly breathtaking spectrum, including petty crime such as violating a prohibitory order for not wearing a mask, jaywalking or a traffic violation.
- The interaction between the proposed law and CCTNS is not clearly defined though likely, given the powers conferred under for digital records go to the same government department.
- In sum, once a person enters their “measurements” within the system, they stay there for life given the average life expectancy in India which hovers around 70 years is less than the retention period.

Strategic initiatives to provide migrants safety nets must increase their ability to migrate safely and keep up the momentum towards migrant-supportive policy. Elaborate

KEY POINTS

- The Government ramped up the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) project, announced the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) scheme, set up the e-Shram portal and began to draft a migration policy.
- Repeated surveys have found that the incomes of migrant households continue to be lower than pre-pandemic levels, even after returning to cities.
- Even the e-Shram portal, which has made impressive progress in registering unorganised workers, has been unable to accurately distinguish and target migrants.
- Migration policy discourse is seemingly paralysed by the now well-acknowledged failure of official datasets to capture the actual scale and the frequency of internal migration in India.
- Policy in India often emerges from the ground up, taking decades to cement into national law and standard practice.
- Maharashtra’s Migration Tracking System (MTS), which focuses on women and children has been successfully piloted in five districts. Chhattisgarh’s State Migrant Workers Policy is premised on registering migrant workers at source and tracking them through phone-based outreach systems.
- In this scenario of well-meaning but scattered experimentation, migrants would be well served if the Centre played a proactive role by offering strategic policy guidance and a platform for inter-State coordination.

The growing per capita subsidy outgo shows that there is a need to target it better, and perhaps move towards the regime of Direct Benefit Transfer. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- India’s subsidies system is possibly the largest globally in terms of volume and number of beneficiaries.
- The Direct Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) framework, developed over the India Stack, has helped address some of this, with an estimated Rs 2.2 trillion in savings over DBT’s lifetime.
- Both the central and state governments have to undertake a massive exercise and identify the deserving beneficiaries, remove people receiving multiple subsidies under different names, and move a majority of the subsidy payments, including for food, to DBT to reduce inefficiencies.
- The Aadhaar is already available as a key identifier to match all beneficiaries against and ensure only the deserving candidates continue receiving them.

- The new subsidies monitoring system also needs a mechanism that automatically eliminates current beneficiaries who obtain jobs in the government, parastatals, or the private sector providing ESI or EPF benefits.
- Reducing the quantum of subsidies by ensuring only the deserving receive them will free up large pools of capital to invest in the health and education sectors.
- Quality education, too, must reach all of the nation's young population, particularly those children whose parents currently depend on subsidies, so that they can break free from the reality their parents were born into.

Mission Vatsalya is expected to bring together services and structures to help children in distress. Explain

KEY POINTS

- Mission Vatsalya, which has been operationalised, is one of the new triad of schemes along with Mission Shakti, and Poshan 2.0, that aims at securing a healthy and happy childhood for every child.
- Components under Mission Vatsalya include statutory bodies; service delivery structures; institutional care/services; non-institutional community-based care; emergency outreach services; training and capacity building.
- The impact of this on one of the pillars of India's child protection services, the ChildLine, has been giving child rights activists sleepless nights. ChildLine (1098), the 24-hour toll free helpline for children in distress.
- ChildLine has been in operation for over 25 years, growing gradually to become one of the largest global networks to assist and rescue children in distress.
- A road map to implement the scheme is not yet available, but it is understood that police personnel will first answer the call, handing over implementation to NGOs later.
- Sometimes, all the children wanted was to spend some time talking to someone, or they were making multiple blank calls before they picked up the courage to tell all.
- The Centre will do well to incorporate these responses as it sets out a road map for a key aspect of child protection. Above all, it must consider the issue from the perspective of the key beneficiary of this scheme the child.

While the National Land Monetization Corporation is a good idea, it must deal with several challenges on various fronts. Explain

KEY POINTS

- The setting up of the National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC) is a progressive step in the quest to implement the government's asset monetisation programme.
- There is a big opportunity for the government to earn revenue. If the property is sold, it would be equivalent to disinvestment; if leased out, it would provide a non-tax revenue flow.
- The NLMC is needed because it would otherwise be difficult for each entity or department to carry out the monetisation plan.

- Valuation is the biggest challenge when it comes to real estate. If land is to be sold, then we need to get the parcel valued and this is where there can be some difficulties.
- Despite all attempts being made by the government to bring in transparency in real estate transactions, there are still cash payments involved.
- The monetisation plan can also be linked with the government's other priorities so that they are targeted towards specific segments.
- For instance, the government may be able to link bidders for a land parcel to a specific goal, say, affordable housing or a renewable power plant.
- A lower reserve price may be considered for some of these projects in the form of a subsidy.

What are the various options available with the Central government to regulate the rapidly growing online gaming sector? Discuss

KEY POINTS

- The formal announcement of an AVGC (Animation, Visual, Gaming and Comics) Task Force, highlights the Centre's commitment towards these sunrise sectors.
- The question of gaming regulation becomes critical, all three recent High Court judgments (Madras, Kerala, and Karnataka) was that State governments cannot categorise Games of Skill under Entry 34 of List II (State list) of Schedule 7 of the Constitution.
- One option could be Entry 33 in List II which, amongst other things, lists sports, entertainments, and amusements.
- The nature of the industry, where transactions are overwhelmingly inter-State, opens a possibility for the Centre to regulate under Entry 42 (inter-State trade and commerce) of the Union List.
- Another option is Entry 31 of the Union List that empowers the Centre to legislate on matters pertaining to posts, telegraphs, telephones, wireless, broadcast.
- The Centre could also use residuary powers (Article 248 and Entry 97 of the Union List, in the Constitution) that empower it to legislate on any matter not enumerated in List II or List III (Concurrent).
- The other pragmatic route for the Union to legislate is through Article 252 of the Constitution, wherein legislatures of two or more States abdicate their power on an entry in the State List.

Despite its challenges, chip manufacture has practical as well as strategic advantages for India in its current situation. Explain

KEY POINTS

- As part of its recent, more wide-ranging PLI scheme, the Centre announced incentives of Rs 2.3 trillion in 2021, specifically for an "India Semiconductor Mission."
- The incentives needed from the government may ultimately need to be much larger than the initial commitments.
- India's need to create more "good" jobs is so great that making a push in more than one sector also makes sense.

- Chip manufacturing might also be complementary to manufacturing that mostly involves assembly, including an increasing number of products that use semiconductors whether they be advanced microprocessors or basic memory chips.
- There will be significant challenges and the Centre has to be prepared for a long haul. But if global expertise can be tapped quickly and appropriately and all aspects of the needed infrastructure can be provided, chip making could be the ramp that allows Indian manufacturers to grow, providing important components for other products, such as cars or medical devices.
- A final benefit to note is that even for relatively commoditised segments of the semiconductor market, the value-to-weight ratio is relatively favourable, meaning that bottlenecks in roads and ports are less likely to hold back growth.

Being much more environment friendly than competing metals, aluminum can play a significant role in creating sustainable smart cities. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- The country's urban growth centres are on a path of rejuvenation, with the government of India taking up an initiative to promote 100 sustainable and inclusive cities in a time-bound manner.
- A look at the aluminium consumption figures for India shows the power sector to be the biggest consumer of aluminium at 48 per cent, followed by transport and automobiles at 15 per cent, building and construction at 13 per cent, and consumer durables having 7 per cent aluminium consumption.
- These consumption figures are bound to grow as the downstream aluminium sector helps write the smart city story with its vast offerings in the form of extrusion products, bars, rods, and other profiles.
- Aluminium offers half the carbon footprint of competing metals and thus more significant environmental sustainability benefits.
- Providing sustainable mobility solutions is an essential part of the smart cities initiative, where globally, transportation accounts for 26 per cent of the aluminium consumption. Its physical properties are noteworthy.
- This broad-spectrum demand for aluminium would soon have India catching up with its developed peers. As projects under the 100 smart city initiative grow further to include newer cities, the wonder metal is on its journey to increase its per capita consumption in India from 2.5 kg and take it closer to the global average levels of 11 kg and beyond.

Can the policy of food subsidy be a sustainable path towards poverty alleviation in the country? Comment

KEY POINTS

- The World Bank paper, using the Consumer Pyramid Household Surveys (CPHS) data, has put it at 10.2% (2019).
- Another estimate of poverty by NITI Aayog—the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI)—has put Indian poverty at 25% in 2015 based on National Family Health Survey data.
- This MPI is calculated using twelve key components from areas such as health and nutrition, education and standard of living.

- Following the outbreak of Covid-19, the government launched PMGKAY as a special Covid-relief scheme in April 2020, to distribute 25 kg of cereals per family per month in addition to food transfers under NFSA. The scheme was justified to help migrant workers.
- As on April 1, 2022, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) had stocks of wheat and rice at 74 MMT, against a buffer stock norm of 21 MMT, implying an excess of 53 MMT.
- As per the High-Level Committee on restructuring FCI, leakages were more than 40% based on NSSO data of 2011. Ground reports suggest that these leakages still hover around 30% or so.
- The savings so generated can be ploughed back into investments in agri-R&D, rural infrastructure (irrigation, roads, markets, etc) and innovations, which will help create more jobs and reduce poverty on a sustainable basis.

Despite huge challenges, India has a great opportunity to show its ability in regulating digital assets. Examine

KEY POINTS

- Digitisation is expected to transform business and the global economy, especially with the lifestyle changes ushered in by the pandemic.
- Digital assets, be in cryptocurrencies, non-fungible tokens (NFTs), gaming, metaverse, loyalty points, wallets, etc., have undergone a sea change in the last few years, with many new use-cases.
- Policymakers would have to be more principle based, less prescriptive, keeping customer protection and resultant systemic risks.
- It recognises the threats of global financial stability, illicit finance and national security risks, and consumer, investor and business interests involved with digital assets.
- Regulators would have to visualise the far-reaching use of technology in the regulated services to first understand use-cases and attendant risks, and then regulate the digital revolution underway.
- Conventional means to rule-making may defy regulation of digital assets and get constrained by regulatory silos, turfs, domain and legal limitations.
- CBDCs can be the first (and not the only) natural response to regulated digital assets.
- India is on the cusp never before has a topic seen such interest, on this sustained a basis. The policy-making must follow a detailed study of the risks, opportunities and challenges posed by the current digital assets revolution. This is India's moment to show leadership in regulation and promote innovation.

6. HEALTH

Healthcare as an optional public service would ensure the legal right to receive free, quality health care in a public institution. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- Universal health care (UHC). Meanwhile, UHC has become a well-accepted objective of public policy around the world.

- The basic idea of UHC is that no one should be deprived of quality health care for the lack of ability to pay.
- In concrete terms, UHC typically relies on one or both of two basic approaches: public service and social insurance.
- A primary health centre can work wonders, but only if doctors and nurses are on the job and care for the patients. India's public health services have a bad name in that respect, but they are improving, and they can improve more.
- The private sector is too entrenched for a NHS to displace it in the near future. But it is possible to envisage a framework for UHC that would build primarily on health care as a public service, and have a chance at least to converge toward some sort of NHS in due course.
- Social insurance, however, carries a risk of tilting health care towards expensive tertiary care, and also towards better-off sections of the population.
- The scope and quality of these services are growing steadily over time. A Right to Health Bill would be an invaluable affirmation of the State's commitment to quality health care for all.

The goals of reducing the incidence of Tuberculosis and of reducing mortality cannot be reached without addressing under nutrition in the country. Explain

KEY POINTS

- With more drug arsenals such as rifampicin, ethambutol, pyrazinamide, the fight against TB bacteria continued, which became multidrug resistant.
- The nutrition of the individual, is the most vital factor in the prevention in tuberculous disease
- The fact is that 90% of Indians exposed to TB remain dormant if their nutritional status and thereby the immune system, is good.
- When the infected person is immunocompromised, TB as a disease manifests itself in 10% of the infected.
- Chhattisgarh also initiated the supply of groundnut, moong dhal and soya oil, and from April 2018, under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana of the National Health Mission, all States began extending cash support of Rs 500 per month to TB patients to buy food; this amount needs to be raised.
- The intake of adequate balanced food, especially by the poor, can work as a vaccine to prevent TB.
- This vaccine is "polyvalent, acting against many gastrointestinal and respiratory tract infections; orally active, that can be produced in the country without patent rights; dispensed over the counter, without prescription and without any side-effects; safe for children.
- The food vaccine is a guaranteed right for life under the Constitution for all citizens, more so for TB patients. Thus, the goals of reducing the incidence of TB in India and of reducing TB mortality cannot be reached without addressing undernutrition.

7. EDUCATION

The National Education Policy is a great opportunity for the Government of India to set right architecture education. Explain

KEY POINTS

- NEP seeks a close connection between education and profession, and directs professional bodies such as the CoA to set standards that education will strive to meet.
- It means that though education commences in campus, it will mature in practice. Second, undergraduate courses should be liberal, allowing students to be trained and to help identify their paths.
- Unlike the current model that trains only a professional apprentice, NEP enables students to take either a practice or a research route. This is bound to pave the way for diverse programmes and support research training.
- Autonomy will be granted to institutions, which will save them from stifling regulatory arrangements and the standardised programmes they push.
- NEP's mission to restructure undergraduate education as a three-year, liberal, broad-based education bodes well for architecture. Shorter programmes can build sufficient capacities to work as apprentices in industry/field-based organisation.
- The world over, professional bodies focus on professional standards and let academic institutions decide their creative ways to meet the objectives. NEP promises that.
- Architecture institutions pack semesters with many subjects. They far exceed an average of 55 hours work week and deny space for the pursuit of personal development.

Professional human resources management systems in Indian Universities are vital in achieving goals of the National Education Policy 2020. Elaborate

KEY POINTS

- To successfully implement the recommendations of the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020), the top priority for the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) is to transform the higher education sector in India.
- Currently it lacks quality and suffers from falling standards, inadequate human resources, and an absence of professional expert systems.
- The importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) and its existence in the university system, particularly given the changing academic environment worldwide.
- The existing Establishment Department plays a very minimal role in human resource management, such as assisting in issuing the job contracts/appointment letters, assisting in the recruitment and promotion processes, maintaining the attendance and personnel records etc.
- There are efficient HRM polices for teaching and non-teaching employees, including focused and targeted training programmes. Given the swift changes and substantial global transformation in the universities, particularly during the last few decades.

- The core responsibility of strategic HRM could be to exhibit progress in the transformation of HRM strategy development and practice proactive HRM instruments, such as recruitment and selection of employees, institutional rules and regulations.
- To sum up, there is a dire need to develop a sound and proactive professional HRM team in Indian universities that could take initiatives toward developing high-performing institutions and shift from transactional to strategic and transformational HRM.

8. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The visit of Nepal's Prime Minister to India should be used as an opportunity to recast power and trade links. Examine

KEY POINTS

- The visit of Nepal's Prime Minister to India is the first bilateral visit abroad a who leads an election government.
- Nepal's relations with India, that plummeted to a historic low after the Indian blockade in September 2015, have yet to recover as Nepalis do not see relations with India improving any time soon.
- India's refusal to accept demonetised bills with the Nepal Rastra Bank worth just INRRs 7 crore and the unknown fate of the report submitted by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) .
- Geopolitics is a complicated challenge for Nepal, whose geography requires it to make best use of its position between China and India.
- With relations between India and the United States further complicated by the China factor and India abstaining on the Russia vote in the United Nations even as Nepal voted in favour of it, the problems have continued to mount.
- For India, buying power from Nepal would mean managing peak demand and also saving the billions of dollars of investments which would have to be invested in building new power plants, many of which would cause pollution.
- Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) signed between India and Nepal needs more attention from the Nepali side.
- A commitment on implementing this would attract more foreign investments from Indian investors.

India's Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) with Australia integrate both strategic and economic benefits. Elaborate

KEY POINTS

- The best part about India's Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) with Australia is that it bundles together both strategic and economic benefits.

- India's semi-conductor and electric vehicles push could do with reliable supplies of rare minerals. According to industry assessments, Australia accounts for over a third of India's coal imports, on which a duty of 2.5 per cent is levied.
- This is likely to be reduced to zero, opening up sourcing options for cement and steel producers. India's infrastructure building plans could stabilise in the wake of the ECTA.
- The negotiators from both sides deserve appreciation for being pragmatic in leaving the difficult issue of dairy exports from Australia for inclusion at a later date and closing the deal, even if it's an abridged one.
- India, too, is trying to create a new manufacturing ecosystem, built on a measure of tariff protection and local sourcing.
- A trade deal with Australia holds out promise because the two economies have complementary strengths and few overlaps.
- This is unlike countries such as Bangladesh, China or Vietnam. If Australia is a major mineral and agri exporter, India specialises in refined petroleum, jewellery, chemicals and garments.
- However, India will have to concede opening up of government procurement, which amounts to over 20 per cent of GDP or \$500 billion, as it has done so with respect to UAE.

Though United Nation's stature has been diminished by its inability to stop wars, its record in peace-keeping, delivering humanitarian relief is formidable. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- A unilateral war, without the UN's sanction, goes against the fundamentals of its Charter.
- Ukraine's President lost no time to demand that a country that commits war crimes should not be allowed to hold a permanent seat in the Security Council.
- Belarus quickly abandoning its status as a non-nuclear-weapon country, reaffirming its readiness to host Russian nuclear weapons on its territory, is a fallout of grave concern.
- Ever since its inception, the UN has been at the forefront of several efforts to reconstruct societies torn apart by conflicts and to maintain ceasefire among warring parties.
- The first such operation, the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), launched in 1948 following the Arab-Israeli conflict the same year, is still operational.
- A stray incident could ignite more disarray and violence ahead. Issues such as European security and arms control will need to be resolved through dialogue to prevent further disaster. In all these, the UN will have a major role to play.
- However, those who rush to write obituaries for the UN whenever it fails to avert a conflict should not overlook the fact that the only global body of its kind is the sum of its parts and cannot exceed the political will of its member states.

How does the India-Australia trade pact benefit the Information technology firms in India? Explain

KEY POINTS

- The Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) recently signed between India and Australia includes a commitment from Australia to amend its domestic tax law to “...stop the taxation of offshore income of Indian firms providing technical services to Australia”.
- Accordingly, the India-Australia Tax Treaty (For the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income [1991]) is included in Schedule 35 to the Australian International Tax Agreements Act.
- In the case of Tech Mahindra, the taxpayer had a permanent establishment (PE) in Australia as well as offshore staff located in India. For completing contracts with Australian clients, the company used services of its staff located in Australia as well as those located in India.
- The source of income emanating from offshore services rendered from India would not be regarded as taxable in Australia, under its domestic tax law since the services are performed outside Australia.
- Representations were made to the Indian government to resolve this issue. Consequently, Australia’s commitment under the ECTA to resolve this issue through changes to its domestic laws is a welcome development for India-based IT service providers who power the bulk of India’s global service exports.

Explain the various options that are available to resolve the India-Srilanka fisheries issue.

KEY POINTS

- After a gap of 15 months, the India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries held its much-awaited deliberations (in virtual format) .
- Apart from poaching in the territorial waters of Sri Lanka, the use of mechanised bottom trawlers is another issue that has become a bone of contention between the fishermen of the two countries; the dispute is not just between the two states.
- The revised scheme has to absorb satisfactorily not only the unit cost of long liners but also the running cost. Also, there is a compelling need for the Central and State governments to implement in Tamil Nadu the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana in a proactive manner.
- At the same time, Sri Lanka should take a lenient view of the situation and refrain from adopting a rigid and narrow legal view of matters concerning the release of 16 fishermen or impounded fishing boats (around 90 in number).
- Any delay in this will only increase the bitterness between the two countries at a time when the economic crisis of Sri Lanka is generating empathy in India.
- A number of options are available to make the Palk Bay not only free of troubles but also a model for collaborative endeavours in fishing.

Explain the various factors that are expected to dilute the global status of dollar.

KEY POINTS

- US Senate, in its “Defending Ukraine Sovereignty Act”, effectively threatened to cut Russia off from access to US dollars as a consequence of its aggression.

- Several Russian banks have been disconnected from the SWIFT system, seriously constraining their ability to communicate with other global banks.
- There are reports that China is attempting to buy oil from Saudi Arabia in yuan, and Russia is demanding to denominate its oil trade in rouble.
- To appreciate the role of the dollar as an international currency, we may note the following trends for the pre-Covid world. First, by the end of 2018, the US Fed revealed that more than 45 per cent of dollar bills are held outside the US.
- IMF data reported that as of end-2019, the dollar tended to play a significant role in exchange rate determination in 38 countries that do not have a freely floating exchange rate; the euro comes second with a list of 25 countries, many of whom belong to Francophone Africa.
- In terms of the IMF's 2019 edition of Currency Composition of Official Foreign Exchange Reserves (COFER), since the beginning of the new millennium, nearly 60 per cent of the global forex reserves have been invested in US dollars.

Countertrade presents an effective way of mitigating risks posed by protective trade policies by various countries. Elaborate

KEY POINTS

- The idea of creating a trade settlement mechanism in rupee to facilitate and augment bilateral trade ties between India and trade partners is not a new one.
- India has, in the past, accepted and made payments in rupee for its trade with several countries including Russia, Nepal, Iran, Bangladesh, and a few east European countries.
- To that end, countertrade presents an effective way of (i) mitigating risks posed by protective trade policies like sanctions, currency restrictions, non-tariff barriers etc; (ii) challenges associated with outward remittances of foreign exchange, where conventional means of payment is non-existent or complex for a variety of reasons; (iii) challenges in securing supply of strategic mineral resources where India has significant import dependence.
- India Exim Bank's recent study has identified 30 countries to start with, where a countertrade mechanism under the debt-for-goods model would be prudent.
- The countertrade policy for India could be an umbrella arrangement, including a mechanism for local currency trade, but not limited to it.
- The international trading regime with dollar at the pivot has made trade settlements susceptible to actions by the US.
- India has taken a strong stand of safeguarding its economic interests, even amid the growing clout for suspending trade relations with certain countries.

G.S. PAPER - III

9. ECONOMY

India's Intellectual Property Rights regime requires a comprehensive make over. Do you agree with this view? Comment

KEY POINTS

- The 161st Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce was much discussed within legal circles and appreciated by the US Chambers of Commerce in its 10th edition of the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index.
- A lot can be learned and adopted from their patent strategy, which is focussed on filing and acquiring high-value patents for their business interests.
- According to Economic Survey 2021-22, India's domestic filing of patents rose 30 per cent in the last five years whereas the number of patents granted during the same period almost tripled.
- This necessitates establishing a robust IPR regime with targeted strategies and government policies that will strongly support the holistic development and sustainability of the intellectual rights of individuals.
- With continuous efforts in this direction, India has significantly improved its ranking on the International IP Index and currently stands 43rd among 55 countries.
- The committee, in its report, has further recognised the significance of industry-academia partnership to boost research and innovation, primarily in the pharmaceutical sector.
- To foster IP cooperation between nations, the report recommends collaborative efforts with other countries and international organisations through MoUs, which will result in the exchange of crucial information on the best practices and expertise in IPR.

The government must ensure better supervisory mechanism of banks rather than wholesale privatization. Do you agree with this view? Comment

KEY POINTS

- As per the stated policy of the Reserve Bank of India, banks cannot be run by industrial houses. Once the industrial houses are excluded, there are no entities that have the required financial capability to take over any of the government banks.
- The market cap of State Bank of India is \$54.78 billion as on March 2022., and Bank of Baroda's \$7.04 billion.
- To prevent banks from taking undue business risks using public money, there are checks and balances like Statutory Liquidity Reserve Ratio and Cash Reserve Ratio.
- These apart, they have to adhere to various regulations regarding credit dispensation like group exposure limits, income recognition norms, provision for bad debts, etc. Hence wholesale privatisation is not only undesirable but also dangerous as the public money is involved.
- Banks owned by sovereign government provides tremendous comfort level to depositors. The common man feels that a government bank cannot fail and his money is safe.
- Private banks operate with the sole aim of adding shareholder value whereas government banks also try to serve society and ensure implementation of all government programmes for the social sector.

- Performance should not be measured simply based on profitability or business handled but with the contribution to society, direct as well as indirect.

The introduction of new financial instrument by Reserve Bank of India can handle issue of liquidity in the economy effectively. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- The decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) earlier this month to institute a new instrument called the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) as the floor in the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) corridor is a significant milestone.
- SDF as it stands currently has the following features viz; (a) it is the floor of the LAF corridor, replacing the hitherto fixed rate reverse repo;
- It is a monetary policy instrument to absorb liquidity without any collateral (collaterals in this case are normally government securities) with an interest rate of 3.75 per cent;
- It is operated on an overnight basis, with the flexibility to absorb liquidity for longer tenor with appropriate pricing;
- Deposits under the SDF shall not be reckoned as balances eligible for the maintenance of the cash reserve ratio (CRR) under Section 42 of the RBI Act, 1934, but shall be an eligible asset for maintenance of the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) under Section 24 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- SDF being a non-collateralised instrument gives the flexibility for surplus liquidity management of larger magnitude as it removes the “binding constraint” on RBI to possess government securities in its balance sheet.
- Thus, SDF becomes a truly monetary policy instrument. The RBI Governor in his press conference of April 8 in this context has mentioned that SDF would enable RBI to sterilise liquidity.

There is a need to create opportunities for work by supporting the gig economy in the country. Do you agree with this view? Comment

KEY POINTS

- Gig economy today ranges from ride-sharing, deliveries, home-services, beauty and wellness to even gig-work in the hi-tech space such as coding, project management, marketing, fintech, pharma, edu-tech and so on.
- The prime minister recently mentioned that 800 million people in India received free ration and benefited from the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.
- With the population growth averaging 15-18 million per year and with number of jobs created being 1/10th of the same, the only major option is self-employment, gig or informal employment.
- The gig economy has also led to emergence of start-ups like “JEEVITAM” (meaning livelihoods) that are creating massive social impact on ground by reaching the unreached.
- The ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship has also launched “Bharat Skills”, a central repository for skills which provides NSQF curriculum, course material, videos, question banks, mock test and qualification packs.

- While gig economy is a boon to crores of Indians wanting to earn a livelihood from work, there are perceived concerns around safety and social security.
- The future is therefore “work” and regulations should recognise the fact that it is impossible for any country and government to enable and create that many jobs.

Trade Receivables Discounting System must be promoted more for its ecosystem benefits and has shown growth in the wake of the pandemic-induced crisis. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- The Trade Receivables Discounting System (TreDs), a bills discounting platform for MSMEs vendors, has shown some growth in the wake of the pandemic-induced crisis, but is still an under-performer in relation to the unmet credit needs of MSMEs.
- Under TreDs, which kicked off in 2017, invoices are placed on a ‘platform’ now provided by three recognised exchanges, with MSME sellers, large buyers and factoring agents (banks and NBFCs) as participants.
- The factoring agents bid for the bill after it is validated by a TreDs-recognised buyer, allowing the seller to opt for the best discounted price.
- The reasons for this reluctance are not clear, which gives rise to speculation on whether these entities are averse to transparent invoicing. A further push from the Centre is called for.
- Factoring agents (now banks and big NBFCs) cannot be increased without due regard for whether they meet RBI’s prudential requirements.
- However, for the vendors to be enthused by TreDs, it needs to offer better rates than existing sources of finance, and these include nimble fintech players who are able to cut through red tape.
- This is despite the latter dominating the MSME universe. True formalisation will become a reality when credit products are structured to meet the needs of the small firms.

Transformation of collateral management industry into an asset servicing business adds value to the commodities sector's policy ambitions. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- Exports and the food processing industry rely on robust supply chains and their connectivity with financial institutions to source cheap funds and raw materials.
- Besides the quality of the raw materials, the traders and processors would also require a competitive financial environment and access to it.
- Apart from financing receivables, the commodities procured and stored (warehouse receipts) can also become effective collateral for the bankers to lend against.
- WDRA registered warehouse service providers (WSPs) and the issuance of eNWRs, are expected to ensure the quality and quantity of goods underlying the warehouse receipts.
- Asset service providers in commodities may also extend forecasting services to forewarn risks in commodity financing and advisory in areas such as stock limits, disclosure of storage, etc.

- It will ensure the independence of audit and advisory about commodities underlying the eNWR pledged and its issuer WSP.
- The collateral manager under the mandatory WDRA registration regime would not have to provide for the physical security of the commodity under an eNWR, and that would instead be taken care of by WDRA.
- Such transformation of the 'collateral management industry' into an 'asset servicing business' will add value to the commodities sector's policy ambitions of increased financialisation.

10. AGRICULTURE

The scale and scope of climate impacts in the agriculture sector requires a shift from the practice of individual sector-specific programmes and schemes. Examine

KEY POINTS

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability, released over the month ago, delivered a wake up-call to narrow the widening "adaptation gap" and build resilience against "unfamiliar" climates.
- The report observes with confidence the adverse impact of these climatic changes on availability and prices of food, exacerbating undernourishment in the South Asian region.
- According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, India is among the top ten countries most affected by climate change. At a broader level, the country may keep pace with the food requirements of a growing population, courtesy the technological and institutional innovations.
- Agriculture being a State subject under the Indian Constitution, planning and policy implementation falls substantially within the purview of respective States and local institutions, with the Central government providing the broad policy framework and guidelines.
- The scale and scope of potential climate impacts in the agriculture sector warrant a shift from the current practice of individual sector-specific programmes and schemes.
- Mainstreaming of climate considerations both across the development programmes in agriculture, forestry, land use, water and health as well as in the process of spatial planning considering natural, socioeconomic and demographic conditions are required.

11. ENERGY

The tariff problem in renewable energy needs to be fixed properly for ramping up our renewable generation. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- Power generation tariffs in India comprise two parts. The first part is a fixed component the cost that a generator incurs. This is not linked to the amount of power generated. The second part varies with the quantum of generation. The two-part tariff has been in vogue since 1992.
- It applies to thermal and hydro generation. It does not apply to renewable generation solar, wind, and also nuclear.
- Under the two-part formula, the variable cost is calculated on the basis prescribed by the regulatory commissions.
- In the case of hydropower generation, the fact is that we don't have any valuation for water as we have for coal or gas and hence, hydro generators do not have any variable cost of generation.
- On the other hand, solar and wind generation account for about 10 per cent of the generation today and going by the statement delivered during COP26 in Glasgow.
- If we are serious about having a renewable generating capacity of 450-500 GW by 2030, we need to create a proper environment and ensure adequate returns to invite fresh investments into renewable generation.
- The switch from a single to a two-part tariff structure for renewables has to be made right now as we are at the cusp of ramping up our renewable generation and it takes time for matters to get streamlined as we have seen in the past.

Hydrogen could play a decisive role in India's Net Zero ambition and in making India Aatmanirbhar in energy. Analyse

KEY POINTS

- India's per capita energy consumption is about one-third of the global average and one-twelfth of the U.S. Increasing growth and economic prosperity would significantly increase India's energy appetite furthering import dependence.
- It will complement and accelerate renewables into India's clean energy transition, thereby supporting India's ambitious plan to achieve 500 GW renewable capacity by 2030.
- On the demand side, a five-step strategy should be devised. Firstly, to create an initial demand, a mandate should be given to mature industries such as refining and fertilisers, with adequate incentives.
- On the supply side too, a five-step strategy should be devised. Firstly, investment in R&D should be accelerated to bring its cost at par with fossils.
- Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme with a target to produce 15 MMT of compressed biogas could be leveraged by exploring biogas conversion into hydrogen.
- Commercialize and scale-up nascent technologies, a Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme may be introduced for hydrogen-based projects.
- With hydrogen, India could lead the world in achieving Paris Agreement's goal to limit global warming to 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.
- Hydrogen could lay the foundation of a new India which would be energy-independent; a global climate leader and international energy power.

Energy transition through biofuels is a great opportunity to create, modernize industries and boost technological innovation. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- Brazil has spearheaded some of the paradigm shifts in the field of biofuels, especially bioethanol, way before they became an urgent necessity because of climate change.
- The incremental regulation for ethanol blending in petrol, which currently stands at a 27 per cent mandate, paved the way for increased consumer uptake and inclination for the fuel.
- The ethanol economy received a renewed push by the affordable and simple technological novelty of the “flex engine” disseminated in Brazil after 2003, which allows the same vehicle to be powered by 100 per cent ethanol or petrol, or any intermediary mix of the two. Brazil is one of the largest producer of cars.
- In an effort to green the transportation sector, there is an increasing trend towards electrification of vehicles, which is often misleadingly synonymised with one of its options battery-powered electric vehicles (BEVs).
- Being tropical countries, the two largest producers of sugarcane in the world are, therefore, well poised to spearhead together ethanol as a global commodity and pave the way for a new international market that favours developing countries in the first place.
- Energy transition through biofuels is a great opportunity to create and modernise industries, boost technological innovation, attract investment and generate high quality jobs.

12. S & T

Web 3.0 is an attempt to remove the centralisation of domain name registries and the hegemony of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). Discuss

KEY POINTS

- Silicon Valley entrepreneurs have created a new frontier called Web 3.0, whose claim that they will ‘democratise’ the internet by providing decentralised recognition of web page addresses (domain names).
- Web 3.0 is an attempt to remove the centralisation of domain name registries and the hegemony of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). It relies on blockchain technology to accomplish this.
- Unstoppable Domains Inc. relies on the blockchain. Since the latter is a peer-to-peer network which does not need a central body to verify (or issue) domain names, Unstoppable Domains says it is transferring control back to the users.
- Web3’s supporters say it will spawn a decentralised version of the internet where platforms and apps are built and owned by users.
- Unlike Web2.0 (the current web), which is dominated by centralised platforms such as Google, Apple, and Facebook.
- The top 2% of accounts own and control 95% of the \$800 billion supply of Bitcoin, and that 0.1% of Bitcoin miners are responsible for all new Bitcoin output.

- Web 3.0 space—whether its promised ‘democracy’ for the internet comes to pass or whether all we are seeing is a recentralisation of value in the hands of a few.

Despite criticism from United States Trade Representative Report, India should continue its efforts to localize data. Discuss

KEY POINTS

- The report of USTR alleges that India has proposed and implemented several data localisation rules that could act as an impediment to digital trade and increase the cost of operations.
- Protection of privacy of personal data of customers can be ensured more effectively if it is housed in servers in the country.
- RBI’s firm implementation of the order issued in 2018 that all payment service players should store all information relating to payments by Indian citizens on servers located in India affirms the advantages of data localisation.
- Sensitive data relating to credit and debit card payments are now being stored in servers within the country and the RBI has better access to the data for surveillance purposes.
- The US trade representative office has, for instance, flagged concerns about provisions in the Personal Data Protection Bill, the Non-personal Data Governance Framework and the e-commerce policy that are on the anvil.
- These regulations insist on storing data generated by Indians on local servers. It is apprehensive that the e-commerce policy could lead to forced sharing of business sensitive information, trade secrets, intellectual property and proprietary source codes.
- While it is the USTR’s mandate to raise its voice against laws that are not conducive for US companies, the above-mentioned rules are needed to ensure the right to privacy of Indian citizens.

Adequate support from public Wireless Fidelity hotspots is necessary for the digital revolution in India to meet global benchmarks. Elaborate

KEY POINTS

- India has emerged as one of the most data-hungry countries in the world. We are increasingly consuming bandwidth-heavy applications and services, presently at around 14 GB per user per month.
- Rural users are consuming even more video content owing to their semi-literate background, and this is slated to grow further.
- As per the Ericsson Mobility Report 2021, 5G will further shoot data consumption to almost 40 GB per user per month by 2026.
- Mobile broadband has several inherent radio engineering characteristics, due to which, nowhere in the world can it ever guarantee minimum speeds.
- Since an estimated 80 per cent of high capacity data usage is done while indoors and not when mobile, public Wi-Fi will be apt and vital to deliver high-speed, affordable and quality internet services to the masses.

- Unfortunately, public Wi-Fi hotspots in India are at ‘ground-zero’ levels less than 0.5 per cent of the global average of around 362 million (Statista). The historic PM WANI initiative offers a robust solution to this .
- The NDCP target of 10 million public Wi-Fi hotspots by 2022 is also likely to generate demand and scope for local manufacturing of the equipment in India, boosting Aatmanirbharta.

13. INTERNAL SECURITY

Explain the various efforts taken by the Government of India to bring the stability and peace in the Northeastern region.

KEY POINTS

- Assam and Meghalaya chief ministers signed an agreement to resolve the five-decade-old border dispute in the presence of the Union home minister.
- Union home ministry (MHA) decided to reduce the disturbed areas under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in Assam, Nagaland and Manipur after decades.
- As part of that strategy, existing issues of both interstate border disputes and insurgency have been closely studied and negotiated and a few agreements have been signed.
- Assam, with the maximum border disputes in the region, got into a proactive border dialogue ever since the current chief minister took office almost a year ago.
- The model of Assam’s engagement with Meghalaya, is a good one to emulate the two chief ministers, after two rounds of talks in August last year, constituted three committees each under cabinet ministers in their states to go into the complex boundary issues.
- Peace has been witnessed in most places across Assam, and even in Nagaland and Manipur talks with various groups for a permanent solution had resulted in a cessation of violence
- The efforts by the Union government to make the northeastern region the main pillar of the Act East policy have been useful in bringing a sense of political stability that is very crucial for optimal economic development and capacity enhancement in the region.

14. ENVIRONMENT

Individuals with high socioeconomic status contribute disproportionately to emissions and have the highest potential for emissions reductions. Analyse

KEY POINTS

- A paradigm shift in the way we think about climate action has been reported for the first time in the recent IPCC report through a chapter on “demand, services and social aspects of mitigation”.
- The report shows how, through comprehensive demand-side strategies, carbon dioxide and non-carbon GHG emissions globally can be reduced by 40–70 per cent compared to the 2050 emissions projection.
- Lifestyle changes require targeted policy support and investment in appropriate infrastructure, and various user-centric technologies. Demand-side changes cannot deliver the net-zero goal on their own.

- Lifestyle changes are so important because demand-side potential can partially be tapped in the short-term. This makes it an important category for immediate action, when energy prices are high and energy security is a critical issue.
- The demand for fossil fuels is projected to reduce. The report is clear: To limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, coal use without carbon capture and storage would have to fall by about three quarters by 2030, although the world will continue to use oil and gas at least until the mid-century.
- Ultimately, it is for the IPCC to provide the evidence and for policymakers, investors, and all other decision-makers to decide what needs to be done based on national contexts.

Transition bonds can be issued by firms that aspire to reduce their Green House Gas emissions effectively. Analyse

KEY POINTS

- Transition bond is a class of debt instruments that maintain the transparency and rigour that characterise green bonds but are designed to be more inclusive in their standards.
- Unlike green bonds that are earmarked to raise money for climate and environmental projects, transition bonds can be issued by firms aspiring to reduce their GHG emissions.
- The money can be used for activities that reduce the environmental impact of the business, such as carbon capture and storage, decommissioning coal plants, waste-to-energy, or exclusively financing new and/or existing eligible transition projects.
- For instance, a thermal power utility issuing transition bond seeks to achieve emissions rate of 90 gCO₂/kWh.
- Transition bonds can play a significant role in mobilising capital at scale for accelerated industrial decarbonization.
- The use of proceeds was outlined for retrofit of gas transmission and distribution networks, renewable energy, clean transportation and energy efficient buildings.
- Though still in early stages, the issuance of transition bonds is following the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) guidelines on climate transition finance.
- These guidelines provide common expectations to capital markets participants on the practices, actions, and disclosures to be made available when raising funds in debt markets for climate transition-related purposes.

As the green transition works through policies and investments, it will be shaped, by the impact it has on public finances. Explain

KEY POINTS

- India's commitment to Net Zero by 2070, has well and truly set the course for a green transition in the country.
- As the transition works its way through such policies and investments, it will shape, and be shaped, by the impact it has on public finances.

- Unless the carbon price or tax is so punitive as to make the usage of fossil fuels economically unviable, a reasonable assumption for the outcome for the next decade is a large revenue pool based on carbon for the state.
- Incentives will play a key role in the green transition. India has laid out policies across the green sectors: must-run status for renewable energy, large public investments planned for green hydrogen, the FAME scheme for electric vehicles, etc.
- Many new schemes and ideas will be experimented with over the decade: this can help create completely new sectors for investments and job creation.
- Understanding how or when such changes can come in various sectors will be useful in building flexible business models which take into account evolutionary policy landscape.
- As with every such policy, there will be debates on whether it is the role of the government or the individual to create the relevant insurances.