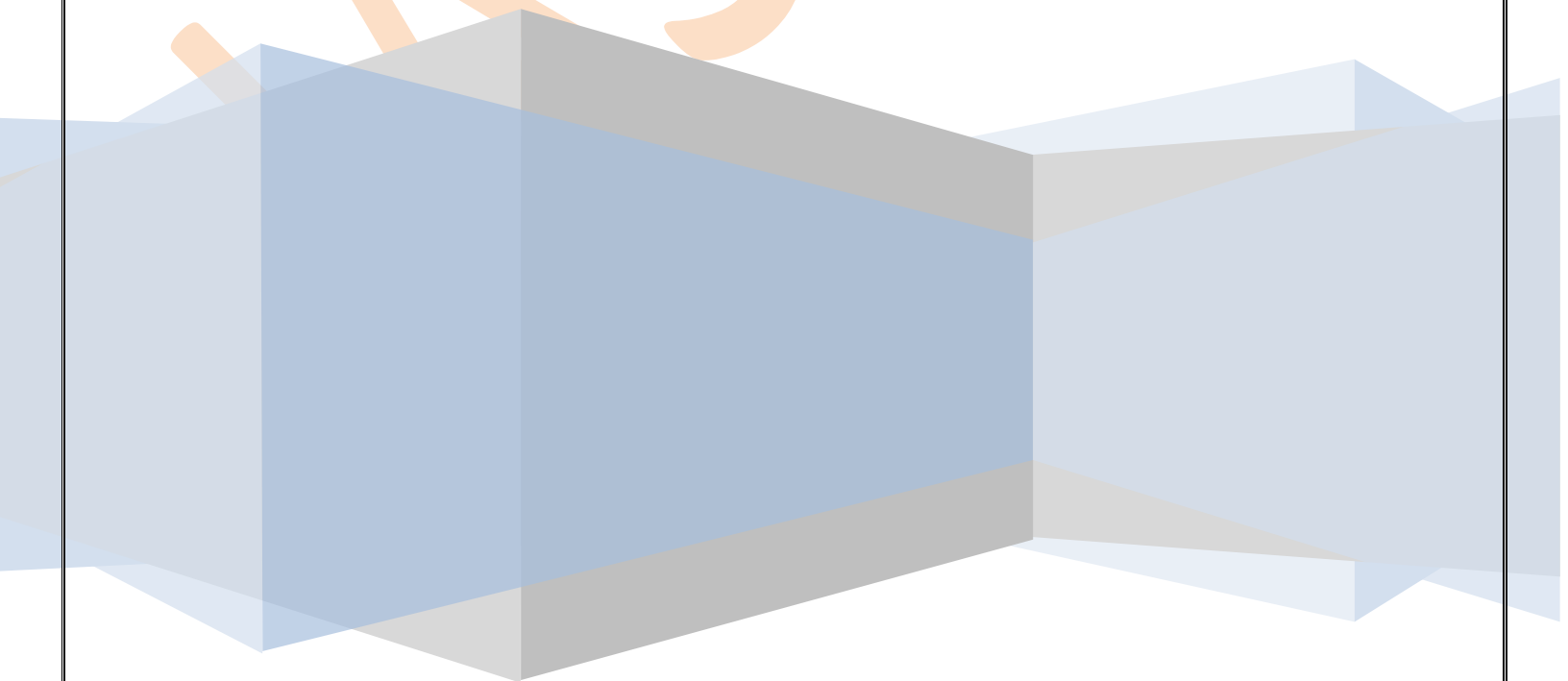


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CURRENT AFFAIRS

**NOVEMBER 2018**



**1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018****TOPIC- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India**

**1. Do you agree with the view that a national a national policy for internal migration is needed to improve earnings and enable an exit from poverty?**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Internal migration has resulted in the increased well being of households, especially for people with higher skills, social connections and assets. However, migration is not free from distress. Many a times, it pushes migrants into high poverty and vulnerabilities. This calls for a national a national policy for internal migration is needed to improve earnings and enable an exit from poverty.

**Why a national policy?**

- The need for a national policy towards internal migration is underscored by the fact that less than 20% of urban migrants had prearranged jobs and nearly two-thirds managed to find jobs within a week of their entry into the city.
- Most jobs in the urban informal sector pay poorly and involve self-employed workers who turn to petty production because of their inability to find wage labour.
- Then there are various forms of discrimination which do not allow migrants to graduate to better-paying jobs. Migrant workers earn only two-thirds of what is earned by non-migrant workers, according to 2014 data.
- Further, they have to incur a large cost of migration which includes the 'search cost' and the hazard of being cheated.
- There is a lack of focussed intervention aimed at migrants. Interventions aimed at enhanced skill development would enable easier entry into the labour market.
- We also need independent interventions aimed specifically at addressing the needs of individual and household migrants because household migration necessitates access to infrastructure such as housing, sanitation and health care more than individual migration does.

**Conclusion**

As remittances from migrants are increasingly becoming the lifeline of rural households, improved financial infrastructure to enable the smooth flow of remittances and their effective use require more attention from India's growing financial sector.

**References:** [The Hindu](#)

**TOPIC- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment**

**2. Highlight some long term solutions that must be prioritized to provide relief from pollution.**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Odd-even schemes and, recently, the allowance by the Supreme Court (SC) for only green or zero-emission firecrackers, are the episodic measures that have been used, and still continue to be, to combat this methodical pollution. But, these don't work in combating the actual source of this scourge.

**Some long term solutions**

- The SC's banning of 15 and 10 year-old petrol and diesel vehicles, respectively, although important and progressive, should be accompanied by measures that increase the forest cover of the land and provide farmers with an alternative to burning the remains of their crops.
- The Aravallis have been violently and mercilessly cut away at, in the name of urbanisation and development, despite safeguards in place to prevent the indiscriminate cutting of its trees. This must be stopped.

- There are machines which can harvest crop residue and convert it into bundles mechanically for onward transportation and sale to thermal plants to produce electricity. Technologies which can convert crop residue into valuable manure are also available.
- Another set of machines can cut crop residue and mix it into soil through tractor-operated machines. The latter two types of technologies can help save the environment and also improve soil fertility.
- An innovative approach could be to use climate change funds to turn farm residues into a resource, using technological options such as converting them into biofuels and fertilizers.
- From an urban development perspective, large cities should reorient their investments to prioritise public transport, favouring electric mobility.
- The World Bank has said it is keen to enhance its lending portfolio to tackle air pollution, opening a new avenue for this.
- Governments should make the use of personal vehicles in cities less attractive through strict road pricing mechanisms. Sharply escalated, deterrent parking fees can be implemented.

### Conclusion

Short-term solutions might bring a few extra breaths, but it is only the long-term ones that will refill our lungs again.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

[The Wire](#)

[The Hindu](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2018**

**TOPIC- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health**

**1. The rapid increase in ageing population in India requires a national strategy to deal with dementia.**

Discuss.

Ans:

### Introduction

Dementia is a broad category of brain diseases that cause a long-term and often gradual decrease in the ability to think and remember that is great enough to affect a person's daily functioning.

### Reasons for need of a national strategy to deal with dementia

- India, along with China has a large section of aged citizen and relatively poor geriatric service.
- India is service sector driven. That means young population often temporarily migrating out and thus old parents are left back alone.
- The average annual economic burden of treatment is often too much for most patients and families.
- Mental diseases are still considered a stigma. Studies have revealed how the stigma attached to the disease leads to the social isolation of patients, their families and careers. Research has thrown light on the deterioration in the quality of their lives.
- Several of the needs of such people — social, economic or those related to health — remain unfulfilled. For instance, leave concessions at work, adaptable housing environments, adequate diagnostic facilities, treatment options, care provisions and risk reduction measures for people with dementia are not in place.
- The complexity of needs cutting across health, economic and social sector requires attention and policy responses.

### Conclusion

As the percentage of aged people in the country increases, improving the lives of people with dementia and their families and carers must become a national priority. These programmes could be aligned with existing policies and care models.

Reference: [Indian Express](#)  
[Indian Express](#)

**TOPIC- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment; Inclusive growth**

2. India's ranking in the latest edition of the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index has jumped 23 spots to 77 among 190 economies. Suggest some measures to further help business and industry become more competitive.

Ans:

#### Introduction

India's ranking in the latest edition of the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index has jumped 23 spots to 77 among 190 economies — a substantial improvement over the last couple of years. The scores should improve further next time with recognition of the laws on GST and more companies taking the resolution route under the insolvency.

#### Some other areas of reform

- India's score was boosted this time because of the strides in cross-border trading with the streamlining of paper work and documentation.
- The other area of improvement is in construction permits. All these underline the importance of supply-side reforms.
- As the World Bank points out, economies with better business regulations are the ones that create more job opportunities and the countries with more transparent and accessible information have lower levels of corruption.
- When it comes to enforcing contracts, the country's score has barely moved in the latest ranking. The lesson here is the absence of judicial reforms, bureaucratic and legal hurdles are hurting the economy.

#### Conclusion

In a federal structure like India, cutting the red tape or easing procedures across states is not easy. However, the signs are that many states have recognised the need to remove hurdles to attract industry. Removing systemic constraints would help business and industry become more competitive.

Reference: [Indian Express](#)

3rd November, 2018

**TOPIC- Environmental pollution**

1. It is very important to segregate waste at the source. Discuss. Suggest measures to incentivize segregation at the source and also highlight the benefits from the same.

Ans:

#### Introduction

The consumption habits of our country may have leapfrogged, but our disposal habits are primitive. We mix up useful wastes with useless wastes, destroying the value in the former.

#### Why is it important to segregate waste at the source?

- Mixing of useful wastes with the useless waste destroys the value of the former. We cannot compost paper and vegetable remains mixed with broken glass and plastic pet bottles, nor can we recycle paper mixed with food wastes and electronic remains.
- The task of segregation is made easy if we segregate at the source rather than the mixed waste. Instead of trying to segregate mixed wastes, we should prevent it from getting mixed.

#### Measures to incentivize segregation at the source

- Every consumer and industrial manufacturer/marketer should be mandated to file their recycling plan or reclamation plan annually, or on a one-time basis.
- They should be made to declare on the packaging what value the marketers are prepared to give back to the consumer if he/she hands over the empty containers, cartons, plastics, corrugators, etc, to the point of sale.
- Marketers may not deal with the wastes themselves. They will locate third-parties to reclaim, recycle, sell to re-users, or incinerators, energy companies, etc. Positive values will be reclaimed by recycling. Reusable material will be sold at commercial values. The rest may be sold to energy or incinerating companies.
- The end-consumer may not find it worthwhile to go to a shop and exchange the waste currency. Rag-pickers may pick up wastes at the doorstep, and claim the waste currency at a discount and hand it over at sales counters. This will incentivise source-segregation.
- Special shops will emerge that only concentrate on the collection of all wastes for a margin in every shopping mall, street corners, etc.
- Heavy fines should be levied on selling companies for litters found in the open, which will induce some policing by them directly. In addition, litter disposal should be made part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- The government should set-up a 'waste police' whose job will be to catch and fine sellers who are not marking waste currency value, people littering, recyclers not completing their jobs, supervisory audit of audits, ensuring manufacturers file their plans, certifying refunds, etc. This 'waste police' should be additional trained staff, and not as an adjunct to the existing police duties.

#### **Benefits**

- It will generate employment and also incentivize the rag pickers to some extent.
- The money collected through fines can be used for training and certifying the people involved. It can train people as part of skill development programmes or get originating companies to train them
- It would also reduce the government's role to a minimal.
- Apart from all the above mentioned benefits, the best and ultimate benefit would be a pollution free environment to live in.

#### **Conclusion**

It is unethical to make a specific part of the population of our country grapple with the harmful and toxic wastes that we produce. It is the responsibility of each one of us to do our bit in managing the waste.

**Reference:** [Financial Express](#)

### ***TOPIC- Science & Technology***

**2. Write a brief note on the contributions of the Indian Science Congress Association. Discuss the contentious issues surrounding the effective functioning of the Association.**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) is a premier scientific organization of India with headquarters at Kolkata, West Bengal. The association started in the year 1914 in Kolkata. The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) owes its origin to the foresight and initiative of two British chemists, namely, Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P. S. MacMahon. ISCA has been promoting science and inculcating the spirit of science through its multifarious activities.

#### **Contributions of the Indian Science Congress Association**

- ISCA brings together scientists both from India and abroad for mutual interaction in the cause of national development.

- It provides a common platform for societies and individuals from all across the country to promote the cause of science in our country.
- Brings together people from different disciplines to contribute to the cause of the association.
- With the objective of involving the young minds of the country and making their career in science the Indian Science Congress Association introduced the programme for Young Scientists from the 68th session of the Indian Science Congress in 1981.
- Today ISC has been built as strong network of more than 50,000 academicians and scientists who has immensely contributed in advancing and promoting the cause of science.

### **Contentious issues surrounding the effective functioning of the Association**

#### **Against:**

- Unlike annual conferences of say the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Indian Science Congress has struggled to attract enough contemporary scientists to take it seriously and speak persuasively about their work.
- Emphasis is no more on rational science. In 2015, after the Narendra Modi government came to power, the Science Congress in Mumbai hosted a session where a speaker and his co-presenter held forth on the presence of “ancient” aeroplanes and spacecraft in the Vedic Age.
- In recent years, with lack of substantial scientific presentations and exchange of ideas, pomp and show along with politics backed populism has tended to acquire central place.

#### **For**

- The Association has taken up matters of national importance. 104th ISCA conference reveals technologies that could help the country achieve its goal of cleaning River Ganga and the Swachh Bharat mission.
- It empowers young scientist to explore on matters related to global challenges. 104th ISCA conference also reveals about methanol economy an easy way to reduce its carbon footprint.
- It emerged as a unique ground to mingle various Nobel laureates, policy makers, scientist, science student, and school kids at single platform.
- It has provided a common platform for exchange of ideas at the international level.

#### **Conclusion**

It is both our moral obligation as well as fundamental duty enshrined in our Constitution to develop a scientific temper. Indian Science Congress through its efforts has done and is doing a lot to ensure the same.

Reference: [The Hindu Businessline](#)

**5<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

### **TOPIC- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies**

- 1. DBT transfers should be prioritised over subsidy payouts as they are more efficient and result in fewer leakages. Comment. (150 Words)**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

The government is mulling a proposal to rationalise agricultural subsidies by paying a part of the power subsidy directly to them, instead of in the form of free or cheap electricity. The government has already rolled out fertiliser subsidy to companies under direct benefit transfer (DBT) and more should be considered to ensure that there is no over-utilisation or wastage of agricultural inputs.

#### **Benefits of DBT transfers**

- The direct benefit transfer (DBT) had raked in savings of over Rs 30,000 crore in 2017-18.

- 3 crore fake gas connections and 2.7 crore counterfeit ration cards have also been declared void as a result of aadhaar-enabled DBT.
- Leakage, delays are prevented.
- Eliminates human interface & thus possibility of mal governance through corruption, bribe etc.

#### Conclusion

While DBT payments make up ~35% of the Centre's expenditure on all welfare schemes, the goal should be to make all their welfare payouts DBT-based.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

### **TOPIC- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment**

#### **2. Highlight the factors responsible for the growth of consumer durables industry in the recent past.**

Ans:

#### Introduction

The consumer durables industry has been on a high growth trajectory in the recent past. There are certain factors that are shaping the trends of consumer durables industry.

#### **Why the consumer durable industry is moving from stores to digital?**

- **Mounting IoT acceptance and the rise of digital consumers:** The concept of Internet of Things is growing in both scale and accessibility. Both brands and consumers today are using IoT as a platform for real-time consumer engagement and customer service. The amount of internet-connected devices has vastly expanded over the past decade.
- **Customised solutions:** Addressing key customer requirements, following integrated approach and providing technologies and solutions that benefit them through low power consumption, low service requirement, low cost of operation, etc, is key to the growth of consumer durables industry in the recent past.
- **Increased online spending:** In the past three years, the number of online buyers has increased sevenfold. Unique services offered by online sellers, burgeoning payment platforms, strengthened delivery logistics, and significant investments are the major factors behind the rising adoption of e-commerce channels.
- **Growing affluence:** The demand for consumer durables in India has been growing on the back of rising incomes. This trend is set to continue even as other factors like rising rural incomes, increasing urbanisation and changing lifestyles aid the growth of demand in the sector.

#### Conclusion

With the government investing significantly in rural electrification, the demand for durables and consumer goods is only expected to increase in rural markets in the next few years.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

6th November, 2018

### **TOPIC- Indian economy: Issues**

#### **1. What are the factors responsible for India's rise in the Doing Business rankings released recently?**

Ans:

#### Introduction

In The World Bank Doing Business Ranking released recently, India has climbed 23 spots to rank 77th globally. This is a substantial jump in the rankings for the second year running.

#### **Factors responsible for India's rise in the rankings**

- Improvement in areas like starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, getting credit, paying taxes, and trading across borders.
- The National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) 2017-2020 for increasing the efficiency of cross-border trade, is putting in place the architecture for decreasing border and documentary compliance time, permitting exporters to electronically seal their containers at their own facilities, and reducing physical inspections to up to only 5% of all shipments.
- The implementation of the single-window clearance system for construction permits in Delhi and the online building permit approval system in Mumbai are important.
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) - There has been an improvement in India's "paying taxes" score—the decline in its relative rank on this front notwithstanding.

#### Way forward

- India's rank is below 100 on five parameters: "starting a business" (137), "enforcing contracts" (163), "registering property" (166), "paying taxes" (121) and "resolving insolvency" (108).
- By amending the Commercial Courts Act, the government facilitated the establishment of commercial courts in 250 districts. If these courts dispose of cases faster, India may rank higher on this parameter next year.
- To improve on the other parameters, ownership and titles need to be online. This comes under the local government.

#### Conclusion

Though the rankings are restricted to findings in two cities- Delhi and Mumbai, it gives investors a yardstick by which to measure government commitment to reforms. Such messaging is important; sentiment, not just fundamentals, matter for investment, particularly foreign direct investment.

Reference: [Livemint](#)

[Livemint](#)

10<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

**TOPIC- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health**

1. **Keeping in mind the Mental Health status of our country, the health policies should be inclusive and pricing should be updated to cover patients under all types of scenarios. Discuss.**

#### Introduction

The health insurance policies until recently did not cover mental illnesses. But then, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) asked insurance companies to make provisions to cover mental illness. This was a step in the right direction as it increased the scope of health insurance coverage for a large section of the population.

#### What is the Mental Health status of our country?

- As per the National Mental Health Survey of India for FY16 conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, nearly 15% of Indian adults are in need of active intervention for one or more mental health issues.
- WHO estimated 56 million people suffer from depression and 38 million from anxiety disorders in a report released earlier this year.

#### What changes have been made by IRDAI?

- The circular issued by IRDAI only states that there should be no discrimination between the two illnesses, mental and physical. It doesn't change anything for the insurers in terms of their



underwriting decisions. Even now, the insurer can altogether deny health insurance to a person suffering from a physical illness, say cancer or heart disease, as per its underwriting norms.

- The present situation is better than a complete ban on coverage of mental health illnesses.
- According to the circular every insurer needs to make provisions for medical insurance for treatment of mental illness on the same basis as is available for treatment of physical illness and stated that insurers will need to comply with these provisions with immediate effect.

### Conclusion

Although the present situation is better, insurers should be able to price policies and premiums appropriately enough to enable them to cover all types of scenarios and situations when it comes to the health of individuals. Only then will the penetration of health insurance increase.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

## **TOPIC- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life**

### **2. What is google duplex? Analyze its benefits for businesses and users. How successful will it be in India?**

Ans:

#### Introduction

Google at the I/O 2018 made a host of announcements for the Android ecosystem and Google apps. However, in a first, Google introduced a new feature called Google Duplex as a part of the revamped Google Assistant. It is essentially a service that works in the background without involving the user.

#### What is google duplex?

It is a new technology for conducting natural conversations to carry out “real world” tasks over the phone. The technology is directed towards completing specific tasks, such as scheduling certain types of appointments and for booking on your behalf at the vendors and shops that have no or little online presence. The system makes the conversational experience as natural as possible, allowing people to speak normally, like they would to another person, without having to adapt to a machine, for such tasks. Google Duplex comes with a more practical bent for the users who do not want the superfluous results from all the high-priced places from far away.

#### Benefits of Google Duplex for businesses and users

- Businesses that are not yet powered by online systems, can benefit from Duplex by allowing customers to book through the Google Assistant without having to change any day-to-day practices or train employees.
- Duplex can also reduce no-shows to appointments by reminding customers about their upcoming appointments in a way that allows easy cancellation or rescheduling.
- Customers often call businesses to inquire about information that is not available online such as hours of operation during a holiday. Duplex can call the business to inquire about open hours and make the information available online with Google, reducing the number of such calls businesses receive, while at the same time, making the information more accessible to everyone. Businesses can operate as they always have, there’s no learning curve or changes to make to benefit from this technology.
- For users, Google Duplex is making supported tasks easier. Instead of making a phone call, the user simply interacts with the Google Assistant, and the call happens completely in the background without any user involvement.
- Another benefit for users is that Duplex enables delegated communication with service providers in an asynchronous way, e.g., requesting reservations during off-hours, or with limited connectivity. It

can also help address accessibility and language barriers, e.g., allowing hearing-impaired users, or users who don't speak the local language, to carry out tasks over the phone.

#### How successful will it be for India?

- The main hurdle for Google would be the 122 recognised spoken languages in India. Google will have to customise Duplex in at least 22 official languages and dialects because nearly 70 percent of Indians consider local languages digital content more reliable than English.
- The success of Google Duplex in India depends on the number of users. As of now, the demographic which indulges in online reservation, schedules appointments at salons over the phone or shops online, is very small.
- Over 300 million Indians have access to smartphones but not many know how to make the most of it. Very few of us actually use Google Assistant for our day to day life activities such as sending texts, finding routes, schedule meetings etc.

#### Conclusion

These devices and smart assistants can really prove helpful in accelerating creativity and productivity in businesses. They will certainly make our lives easier and simpler.

Reference: [The Quint](#)

12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

#### TOPIC- Agriculture issues

1. Discuss some of the schemes aimed at improving the development of the dairy sector in India. Also suggest what more can be done to improve the viability of this sector.

Ans:

#### Introduction

India ranks first among the world's milk producing Nations since 1998 and has the largest bovine population in the World. Government of India is making efforts for strengthening infrastructure for production of quality milk, procurement, processing and marketing of milk and milk products through following Dairy Development Schemes:

**National Programme for Dairy Development(NPDD)**- National Programme for Dairy Development is a scheme aimed to create and strengthen infrastructure for production of quality milk including cold chain infrastructure linking the farmer to the consumer.

**National Dairy Plan (Phase-I)**- NDP I is a scientifically planned multi-state initiative with the following Project Development Objectives :

- To help increase productivity of milch animals and thereby increase milk production to meet the rapidly growing demand for milk.
- To help provide rural milk producers with greater access to the organised milk-processing sector.

**Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme (DEDS)**- The scheme is aimed to generate self-employment and provide infrastructure for dairy sector and to bring structural changes in unorganized sector so that initial processing of milk can be taken up at village level.

However, a lot more can be done to improve the viability of the sector.

- We need more policies to motivate and incentivise farmers who are getting a really raw deal.
- The glut in the milk sector is a bane for them, with procurement prices becoming increasingly non-remunerative for them.
- Further, the state and central governments need to increase budgetary allocations for the animal husbandry sector to increase milk yield.
- Dairy analogues are also creating unhealthy price competition. Use of analogues must be curbed and rules must be formulated for them.

**Conclusion**

The country needs to ramp its R&D and agriculture extension department to transform this sector into a vibrant, competitive and more remunerative sector for farmers.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

**TOPIC- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests**

**2. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of Kra canal for China.**

Ans:

**Introduction**

It is reported that Thailand may be reconsidering a proposal to build a canal across the Isthmus of Kra to link the western Indian Ocean with the South China Sea. China is lobbying Thailand to go ahead with the project.

**Economic dimensions of the project**

- The Chinese envision the huge enterprise as a linchpin in its Belt and Road Initiative, a development strategy designed to link as many as 70 countries into a vast economic web with Beijing at the center.
- The Thai Canal would offer the shortest link between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans compared to other routes. It would reduce the travel time by about 700 km and two to six days depending on the route, substantially reducing the shipping cost.

**Strategic dimensions of the project**

- It would substantially reduce Chinese fears of its ship traffic being blocked by America and its allies at the Straits of Malacca.
- By bypassing the traditional navigation route via the Strait of Malacca, China can easily bypass one of America's major strategic advantages vis-à-vis China at sea.
- The Kra canal is part of China's grand design in the waters that surround India and in the Indian Ocean.
- It is gaining access or acquiring ports or building bases — Hambantota, Gwadar and the base in Djibouti — and has now signed an agreement to develop the Kyaukphyu port in Myanmar's troubled Rakhine state.
- All this is impacting on Indian interests and so will the canal.
- The ultimate objective of China is to emerge as a global maritime leader capable of commanding the oceans.

**Conclusion**

It would be timely for Indian economic and strategic planners to examine the implications of the canal. Indian official agencies and business should engage Thailand on the Kra canal even while the Thai system's consideration is in the initial stages.

Reference: [The Tribune](#)  
[Firstpost](#)

**13<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

**TOPIC- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it**

**1. Critically analyse the performance of India in its resolve to achieve SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by 2030.**

Ans:

**Introduction**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

**Critical analysis of India's performance**

- The road to achieve SDGs is arduous, targets are massive, and the time is running out. But the good news is the intent of the government is well in place.
- The setting up of a high-level steering committee by the Union Cabinet to review India's performance in SDG implementation confirms the resolve.
- Achievements in some areas are remarkable, but a lot is wanting in others. The government of the day can rightfully claim credit for unleashing of financial mainstreaming, direct transfer of benefits and mobile telecom through Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (JAM).
- The Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment report of 2018 lauds India's record in investment. The big three (India, China, Brazil) account for over 45% of global finance.
- However, the report also cautions that investments in India have to reach a level required to meet the PM's ambitious goals for 2022.
- According to Brookings Blog "Future Development", 44 Indians are coming out of extreme poverty every minute. However, we still, ruefully, have 73 million people reeling under extreme poverty.
- The challenge is to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 as a significant goal.
- Other indicators—food security, nutrition, conflict, climate change—require the world's and India's attention to arrest and reverse the scourge of hunger.
- If the efforts continue apace, we will soon be an open-defecation-free country.
- Efforts are under way to improve learning, retention, skilling and providing decent employment opportunities.
- India's primary concern remains around women, their safety, employment, respect and equality.

#### **Conclusion**

People's participation is a better guarantee to attain the objectives. It is imperative, therefore, that active people partnerships are built to ensure that the world achieves freedom from subhuman conditions.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)  
[UNDP](#)

***TOPIC- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights***

## **2. What is nanotechnology? What are some of its applications?**

### **What is nanotechnology?**

- Nanotechnology is science, engineering, and technology conducted at the nanoscale, which is about 1 to 100 nanometers.
- Nanoscience and nanotechnology are the study and application of extremely small things and can be used across all the other science fields, such as chemistry, biology, physics, materials science, and engineering.
- The "nanoscale" is typically measured in nanometres, or billionths of a metre (nanos, the Greek word for "dwarf," being the source of the prefix), and materials built at this scale often exhibit distinctive physical and chemical properties due to quantum mechanical effects.

### **Applications of nanotechnology**

- Using nanotechnology, materials can effectively be made stronger, lighter, more durable, more reactive, more sieve-like, or better electrical conductors, among many other traits. For eg: Nano-

engineered materials make superior household products such as degreasers and stain removers; environmental sensors, air purifiers, and filters; antibacterial cleansers; and specialized paints and sealing products, such as self-cleaning house paints that resist dirt and marks.

- Nanotechnology has greatly contributed to major advances in computing and electronics, leading to faster, smaller, and more portable systems that can manage and store larger and larger amounts of information. For eg: Transistors, the basic switches that enable all modern computing, have gotten smaller and smaller through nanotechnology.
- Nanotechnology is already broadening the medical tools, knowledge, and therapies currently available to clinicians. Nanomedicine, the application of nanotechnology in medicine, draws on the natural scale of biological phenomena to produce precise solutions for disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Nanotechnology is finding application in traditional energy sources and is greatly enhancing alternative energy approaches to help meet the world's increasing energy demands. Many scientists are looking into ways to develop clean, affordable, and renewable energy sources, along with means to reduce energy consumption and lessen toxicity burdens on the environment. For eg: Researchers are investigating carbon nanotube "scrubbers" and membranes to separate carbon dioxide from power plant exhaust.
- In addition to the ways that nanotechnology can help improve energy efficiency (see the section above), there are also many ways that it can help detect and clean up environmental contaminants. For eg: Nanoparticles are being developed to clean industrial water pollutants in ground water through chemical reactions that render the pollutants harmless. This process would cost less than methods that require pumping the water out of the ground for treatment.
- Nanotechnology offers the promise of developing multifunctional materials that will contribute to building and maintaining lighter, safer, smarter, and more efficient vehicles, aircraft, spacecraft, and ships. In addition, nanotechnology offers various means to improve the transportation infrastructure. For eg: Nano-engineering of aluminum, steel, asphalt, concrete and other cementitious materials, and their recycled forms offers great promise in terms of improving the performance, resiliency, and longevity of highway and transportation infrastructure components while reducing their life cycle cost.

Reference: [Nanowerk](#)

14<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

**TOPIC- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;**

1. Discuss how technological advancements can eliminate risks of premature deaths in India due to consumption of nicotine products.

Ans:

#### Introduction

Over 300 million people in India regularly use tobacco products, with a third using cigarette-type products and twice as many using oral tobacco. The use of these products causes over 1 million premature deaths annually in the country, and as the population and disposable income increases, this toll can be expected to worsen significantly.

#### Problem with the nicotine delivery system

- It has been established scientifically that people primarily use tobacco products to obtain nicotine, but nicotine itself is not a significant health risk.
- Rather, it is the way it is delivered that has caused global epidemic.
- Inhalation of smoke is the overwhelming cause of harm from combustible products, and the presence of toxins in oral products explains the high rate of diseases like head and neck cancers among users.

**How technological advancement can solve the problem**

- Simply put, the health catastrophe is a failure of engineering. We have seen technology radically transform an array of other products and services to reduce risks.
- Vaping products (electronic cigarettes) have been identified as 'likely at least 95% less hazardous as smoking' by leading UK health authorities.
- As we are witnessing in the UK, the US and elsewhere, cigarettes can be displaced.
- Sweden, with an oral tobacco product (snus) that has been used widely for decades, shows such products can be manufactured to standards that largely eliminate risks.

**Conclusion**

India can solve this puzzle, preventing millions of premature domestic deaths while creating high-value employment, world-class companies, significant profits and government revenue. It would be an example to the world.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

**TOPIC: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies****2. Forcing RBI to part with its reserves could set up a bad precedent. Discuss.**

Ans:

**Introduction**

The government proposing the Central Bank of India to fix an appropriate economic capital framework of RBI has been a major topic of discussion among critics and experts. The critics have argued that now the government wants RBI to part with its reserves whenever the government wants it do so. Article 7 of the RBI Act, 1934 when invoked empowers the government to ask the central bank to pay up, implying it can withdraw as much capital as it wants.

**Why forcing RBI to part with its reserves sets up a bad precedent?**

- The former RBI governor has given an argument that the transfer mechanism of any such surplus could be illusory with potential long-run consequences on money supply and macroeconomic stability.
- If the RBI comes up with an economic capital framework there is no denying the fact that future coalition governments can come up with a white paper on continued financial sector distress and fiscal strains and the RBI would have no other option but to part with its reserves.
- If non-experts are allowed to set frameworks that could test even the most skilled expert, we would be laying the road to unmitigated uncertainties. We are only too familiar with how one-time loan waivers for genuine farmers' concerns degenerated into a political instrument. One hopes the government would not push our most valued institution down that path.

**The Way Forward**

- The government can itself contribute to the public sector banks considering the significant oil tax revenues it has gained.
- If the government has other expenditure priorities, then it should move on the reform path to privatise some of the insolvent public sector banks.
- This is not the first time the banking system has high NPA levels—the government should let RBI function to the best of its capability without constraining its operational freedom and must respect the expert opinion as well.

**Conclusion**

If the present and former governors with expert domain knowledge are publicly making a case against such a capital transfer, the government must respect such opinions. The government also has the option to set up another expert committee to deal with the problem of sick public sector banks.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

15<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

**TOPIC: Issues relating to poverty and hunger**

1. Despite being one of the fastest growing economies of the world, the hunger level in India has been characterized as serious in the Global Hunger Index, 2018. Discuss the major challenges and the way forward in dealing with the problem of malnutrition our country.

**Introduction**

Out of 119 countries, India has been ranked 103 in the Global Hunger Index, 2018. India's child malnourishment level is not only the highest in the world but varies considerably across States. The hunger levels in our country have been described serious in the Global Hunger Index, 2018. Growing prosperity has hardly made any significant dent in chronic malnutrition of children.

**Major Challenges**

- Though the economic growth of India has been fast, millions of children remain undernourished.
- One problem lies with the current thinking of growth-oriented development. Simply focusing on infrastructure and development is not going to help us deal with the problem of nutrition and hunger. There is lack of better network of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), public health facility and education among women which is a major cause of malnutrition among children. The children are mostly undernourished and hence the issue of stunted growth also persists.
- There is lack of diversity in food intake which has shown to have a connection with the problem of malnutrition. The diversified food intake is very low in a majority of Indian districts.

**The Way Forward**

- An inclusive and holistic approach which includes controlling/regulating food price must be developed.
- The Public Distribution System (PDS) must be developed.
- Relevant steps must be taken to develop income support policies for making food cheaper.
- The government must broaden the ICDS programme by ensuring diversity in food items in worst-hit districts.
- There must be sustained budgetary commitment towards dealing with malnutrition.

**Conclusion**

The launch of the National Nutrition Mission as a strategy to fight maternal and child malnutrition is a welcome step towards achieving the targets of underweight and stunted children below the age of five years. Malnutrition not only impacts early childhood health and imposes disease burden but also affects education, wages and productivity when they grow up, which will impact India's growth.

Reference: [The Hindu](#)

**TOPIC- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources**

2. Discuss the role of the mafias in the education sector of our country.

Ans:

**Introduction**

All the mafias in the education sector remain underground and play a dominant role in decision-making. They are extremely well-connected and deeply entrenched. Let us look at some of the mafias that afflict the education sector in our country:

**How mafias operate in the education sector**

**B.Ed and D.El.Ed:** There are around 16,000 B.Ed and D.El.Ed colleges in the country. A large number of them exist only in name. If you pay them well, you can get a degree without an effort.

**Examination centres:** In a few northern states of the country, a number of examination centres are given on “theke” (contract) for copying. These centres are highly “priced”, as they facilitate mass-copying.

**Publishing:** It happens at two levels. As respective governments provide free books to the students, there are various ways in which “money is made”. The “mandatory cuts” in getting the books printed centrally constitutes a substantial portion.

The other level of “money making” is by a handful of private publishers who enter into an “arrangement” with private schools in the name of quality, and compel the students to buy almost 4-5 times more expensive books as compared to those published by the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training).

**Private schools:** Some of the private schools are bringing a bad name to this segment. Irrational hiking of fees, charging huge sums of money to “lend” their brand, and harassing the brand assignees are some of the many tricks they practise.

#### **Conclusion**

Government must rein-in the mafias that operate in B.Ed and elementary education colleges, in examination centres, in publishing, and even in the private school sector.

**Reference:** [Financial Express](#)

**16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

#### **TOPIC- Indian economy: issues**

##### **1. Highlight the factors that can enable effective penetration of e-commerce into rural markets.**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

Rural e-commerce offers a huge potential to tap in the coming years. It is expected that, by 2021, the internet penetration in rural areas will be as high as 45%, from the current 18%. However, mobile-first strategy cannot be the only strategy to serve rural markets. Effective penetration of e-commerce into rural markets depends upon some other factors as well.

#### **What are the factors that can enable effective penetration of e-commerce into rural markets?**

**Mobile-first vernacular adoption will drive greater reach and engagement:** Customising applications to interact with rural customers in their own vernacular language across different touch-points such as mobile apps, service and call centres is crucial for establishing trust and encouraging customers to transact online.

**Logistics & distribution effectiveness:** India Post has been leveraged by some players, given the cost and coverage it has, and is an effective way to reach the last mile in rural areas. Distributed logistics including using a pool of local people to be used as delivery agents is also an effective access and cost management strategy.

**Assisted commerce:** It is not feasible for all companies to open physical stores in rural India due to high capital requirements and sparsely populated geographies. Generating orders through use of digital catalogues and samples and fulfilling orders through kirana stores, cooperative banks, telco offices, etc, could serve as enablers for assisted commerce in these markets. Also, the offline-to-online model would help alleviate some challenges faced by rural customers, such as low digital literacy and lack of trust on the digital platform.

**Micro market relevant product curation:** Product curation specific to rural markets is vital. The rural demand differs based on location and, hence, serving varied rural customers through the same catalogue isn't an effective strategy. Players need to run continuous analytics and curate a product catalogue based on their past buying behavior.

**Effective use of the right technology:** Technology will be an important lever in serving this market but it's important to keep the digital literacy of the segment in mind before deploying and using technology.



Technology that provides operational effectiveness (data analytics, buying aids, recommendations) or build trust and transparency (blockchain, IoT, payments) are the ones that require more attention in the short term.

### Conclusion

E-commerce players are piloting different strategies to reach rural consumers as the opportunity to grow along with aspirational India is huge. However, success will come for the companies that continuously innovate to engage consumers, especially the non-transacting and service transacting users.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

### **TOPIC: Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security**

#### **2. The government needs to look at measures to cut the stock build up as it will cost the exchequer thousands of crores of rupees as storage cost. Discuss.**

### Introduction

The government is again likely to face the challenge of excessive stock of wheat and rice. Management of the excess of food grains is important as excessive stock will result in shortage of storage capacity, huge carrying cost, deterioration in quality and distortion of open market prices.

### Reasons for stock build up

- Since MSP continues to be at the centre-stage of agricultural policy, it is unlikely that procurement of wheat and paddy would be lower.
- With no guarantee of receiving MSP for other crops, farmers of Punjab and Haryana are unlikely to switch to less water-intensive crops.
- The export of wheat without subsidy is not possible as it faces stiff competition from Russia, Ukraine and US.

### Ways to deal with the excess stock

- The government may consider increasing the coverage under Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) for very poor families.
- Procurement of maize in water-stressed blocks of Punjab and Haryana may be announced. Since maize prices have ruled below MSP, farmers in these states had no incentive to grow maize instead of paddy. Assured procurement of maize in these blocks can reduce rice procurement.
- Surplus wheat and rice stocks can be put to diplomatic use. As a humanitarian gesture, rice can also be gifted to Bangladesh for Rohingya refugees. Several other countries in Africa may also welcome Indian aid in the form of grains.

### Conclusion

India has faced such situations before and is still facing the same. It should come up with measures to deal with the same. Unless the government acts upon the recommendations of experts, the buildup of stocks will happen every few years, imposing a huge burden on the Central exchequer.

Reference: [The Tribune](#)

17<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

### **TOPIC- Various Security forces and agencies and their man**

#### **1. India's first indigenous ballistic-missile armed nuclear submarine (SSBN), Arihant, recently "successfully completed its first deterrence patrol". Does India need such a submarine? Ans:**

### Introduction

India's first indigenous ballistic-missile armed nuclear submarine (SSBN), Arihant, recently "successfully completed its first deterrence patrol". It is fuelled by an onboard nuclear reactor, which allows it to operate underwater for long periods of time. If an adversary were to launch a devastating first-strike on a country, destroying its land-based missiles and paralysing its air force, the submarine — undetected at sea — could still deliver a counter-strike, assuring the "mutual destruction" of both countries.

#### **Does India need such a submarine?**

- This strategic function makes little sense in the modern Indian context.
- There is no realistic threat, which the Arihant could counter, that could wipe out India's existing nuclear deterrent.
- The range of the missiles carried by the Arihant is about 750 km, and so it can only target Pakistan and perhaps China.
- The Pakistan's threat of use of nuclear weapons upon India could only devastate a battlefield but would not affect the Indian military's ability to launch a counter-strike using its existing land or air-based forces.
- Even China's attempt to disable India's nuclear weapons would be fraught with unacceptable risks regardless of whether India possesses SSBNs.
- Much of the rest of the world has moved to outlaw nuclear weapons.
- So the government's active pursuit of nuclear-armed submarines undermines India's stated international position and reflects a security assessment that is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

#### **Conclusion**

It is senseless to spend this money on nuclear submarines when thousands of lives are lost each year because the state pleads that it lacks resources for basic health care and nutrition.

**Reference:** [The Hindu](#)

#### **TOPIC- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation**

#### **2. Examine the reasons for the relapse of Skill India. Suggest measures to deal with the same.**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

The launch of Skill India was backed by fanfare and optimism. The project had a roadmap of skilling a fixed number of the population by 2022. Unfortunately there has been a total loss in translation. The project seems to be ailing and there is a need to take corrective actions to give boost to such a great initiative.

#### **Reasons for relapse**

- 10+2 was introduced by D S Kothari, the then UGC chairman, with vocational education as the central objective in accordance with the recommendations of the Education Commission Report (1964-66). Unfortunately, there were few takers for vocational education, primarily due to deep-rooted social prejudices against working with one's hands as it is considered lowly and demeaning. As a result, over the years, the budgetary provisions for skills in schools dried up and today it exists in a silo as a scheme of the Ministry of Skills and Entrepreneur Development (MSDE).
- Skill India has also been afflicted by insufficient industry partners and the failure to attract genuine skill knowledge providers. At present, with the chase to meet targets, the space has been taken over by fly-by-night operators raising serious ethical issues.
- The MSDE is finding it extremely difficult to tackle the mind-boggling target of skilling 400 million.
- The lack of connection between education and skilling is also hampering the progress of Skill India.

#### **The Way Forward**

- The university system can bring in uniformity throughout the country in terms of enforcing the National Occupation Standards and National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). There is a need to

link education and skilling. The present target would be less daunting with the MHRD's capital and human resources.

- There is a need to realize the fact that Skill India is actually a joint endeavor and would not reap good results otherwise.
- Initiatives must be taken to attract genuine skill knowledge providers.

### Conclusion

Having identified the "monster in the mist", we now need to be bold and implement 10+2 in its original spirit, along with NSQF. The challenge now is how to make a U-turn and kick-start it all over again.

Reference: [Indian Express](#)

19<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

### **TOPIC: Disaster and disaster management**

1. In light of the increasing frequency and severity of weather events coastal districts must continue to strengthen resilience against such weather events. Discuss.

### Introduction

A severe cyclonic storm named Gaja has recently hit the western coast of our country causing damage of infrastructure, agriculture and property. Tamil Nadu was seen more prepared than before in dealing with the storm when it hit the state. However, coastal states must continue to strengthen resilience against such weather events.

### What else needs to be done?

- There is a lot to be done to upgrade infrastructure and housing in coastal districts to meet higher standards of resilience in an era of extreme weather events. Efforts must be made to make construction guidelines.
- Focus must now be on reducing the hazard through policies that create financial mechanisms for insurance and compensation.
- The green cover in the vulnerable areas needs to be expanded.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the new developments that are to take place in the disaster prone areas must be in harmony with nature.
- Disaster norms must be area specific to deal with the diverse challenges.

### Conclusion

The effort to professionalize disaster management through a dedicated national and State organization initiated more than 15 years ago now appears to be paying off. However, we should continue our efforts in the same direction and focus on what further can be done to make the coastal districts safe and prepared for such catastrophic events.

Reference: [The Hindu](#)

### **TOPIC- Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections**

2. Gender sensitisation of the judiciary and appointing more female judges is imperative. Comment.

Ans:

### Introduction

The Supreme Court has recently passed certain key judgments to safeguard the rights of women. It abolished triple talaq, upheld women's autonomy, while declaring the law on adultery unconstitutional, and ruled that the bar on women's entry to the Sabarimala temple is illegal. But the judiciary has also been

a purveyor of sexist notions. Victim-blaming by the courts lends credence to certain stereotypes, and such responses go on to influence the entire criminal justice system.

#### **Why gender sensitization of the judiciary is imperative?**

- In a study conducted by researchers of the National Law University, Delhi, 50 rape case judgments of the Supreme Court were analysed to understand how the court tends to perpetuate gendered opinions.
- It was observed that judges often have a stereotypical image of a rape victim. The researchers found that the judges betrayed sexist notions of gender roles, showed a tendency to use insensitive language and made comments that undermined the seriousness of the incident.
- There was a sharp increase in gender insensitive comments in cases where the woman was sexually active.
- The presence of a female judge on the bench led to a sharp decline in sexist comments. There was no female judge in 44.4 per cent of the cases where the bench made a sexist comment. But only 14.2 percent of the benches with a female judge made a sexist comment.
- Conviction was overturned in 80 per cent of the cases in which the bench made gender insensitive comments.

#### **Conclusion**

Rape victims are subjected to institutional sexism that begins with their treatment by the police, continues through a male-dominated judiciary influenced by notions of victim blaming and ends in the acquittal of many alleged rapists. The solution lies in initiating conversations amongst those who are entrusted with setting the tone of public discourse. Gender sensitisation of the judiciary and appointing more female judges is imperative.

Reference: [Indian Express](#)

20<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

#### **TOPIC: Environmental pollution**

#### **1. India must adopt reinvented toilets and Omni processor waste treatment plants to scale up sanitation. Comment.**

#### **Introduction**

India is further behind on sanitation than on other issues, which is reflected in the high levels of stunting. This situation persists despite high levels of economic development over the years. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) recently suggested that the solution lies in India adopting reinvented toilet and Omni processor waste treatment plants.

#### **Why must these be adopted?**

- These reinvented toilets are special because they expel nothing. They turn liquid waste into clear water for flushing, and solids into pellets or ash that is fertilizer.
- The omni processors for faecal sludge management are 'zero emission' processors that would dump faecal sludge taken from septic tanks into rivers, lakes, farms and open spaces. Thus they would prevent the death of workers in septic tanks.
- Some models of omni processors also attach a gasifier that can use municipal solid waste, providing a solution to handle that urban waste stream as well.
- These are cost effective and sanitation can be rapidly expanded at a very low cost.

- These are finely engineered and equipped with reliable chemical processes.
- Large and often idle sewage treatment plants can be put to dual use, by adding faecal sludge treatment plants (FSTP), preferably with an omni processor.

### Conclusion

Open defecation, still prevalent in India has a high health cost. It spreads disease, stunts children and prevents them from achieving normal physical and mental development. To scale up sanitation India must adopt technologies like reinvented toilets and omni processors.

Reference: [The Hindu](#)

### **TOPIC- India and its bilateral relations**

**2. As a new chapter opens in Afghan affairs, India has to employ a supple strategy to safeguard its interests. Discuss.**

**Ans:**

### Introduction

The Taliban has been gaining a stronger foothold in Afghanistan, with reports that it controls almost half the territory in the country. In contrast, the government is seen as weak and ineffective in fighting back. Afghanistan has huge significance for Indian foreign policy as well as domestic security. Trump administration has been making several knee-jerk changes in their foreign policy which has implications for India in the Afghan great game.

### What role can India play in Afghanistan?

- As a new chapter opens in Afghan affairs, India has to employ a supple strategy to safeguard its interests.
- This should include the continuance of full support for the Afghan government and also vigorous pursuit of its assistance programme.
- This is a fundamental basis of the goodwill that India has across all sections in Afghanistan.
- India should separately interact with all ethnic groups, especially those with whom it has had excellent ties in the past. There is a coincidence of interests with them both in the Afghan and the regional contexts.

### Conclusion

In the past Pakistan ensured that India was out of international diplomacy on Afghanistan. Now, it will be a pity if India voluntarily shuts itself out by refusing to develop contacts with the Taliban. Contacts do not imply either support or endorsement but generally they are essential for participation in the game of nations.

Reference: [The Tribune](#)

**21<sup>st</sup> November, 2018**

### **TOPIC- Achievements of Indians in science & technology**

**1. India has made a few accomplishments in dealing with Antibiotic Resistance (ABR) but there still exist critical areas where no development has been made so far. Discuss.**

### Introduction

Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has recently notified the much-awaited tolerance limits for antibiotic residues in meat, milk, egg and fish whereby regulators can now prosecute companies for having higher residues of antibiotics in their products. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has also developed draft standards for antibiotic residues in pharmaceutical industrial effluent and common effluent treatment plants.

**What are the critical areas that have been left unaddressed?**

- Antibiotics are widely misused in livestock, poultry and aquaculture. Department of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries (DADF) has failed to bring a law to control use of antibiotics as growth promoters. It has also failed to set up a system to track the use of antibiotics in animals. Similarly it has also failed to develop a plan to phase out use in animals of antibiotics that are critically important for humans.
- Ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) was made responsible for rolling out national programmes on research, awareness, education, training and surveillance, all of which are delayed.
- Similarly, MoHFW was to develop an investment plan on ABR. But, instead of dedicated investments, the ministry has removed the separate budget head for ABR.
- Because of MoHFW inaction, the progress at the state level is even tardier. So far, Kerala is the only state that has released its state action plan.

### Conclusion

A lot of ground will have to be covered quickly to strengthen laboratories, develop capacity, establish mechanisms to control misuse of antibiotics, and set up modalities for ABR surveillance in food, animals and environment. People are already dying because of ABR. If we don't act quickly, we risk jeopardising the lives of millions in the near future.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

### **TOPIC- Indigenization of technology and developing new technology**

#### **2. Discuss the advantages of additive manufacturing over traditional manufacturing. Also discuss why India must adapt to additive technologies.**

Ans:

#### **Introduction**

Additive manufacturing is a transformative approach to industrial production that enables the creation of lighter, stronger parts and systems. Additive manufacturing has already begun to transform manufacturing in Western countries.

#### **Disadvantages of traditional manufacturing**

- Traditional manufacturing of mechanical parts involves making a mould and then stamping out parts by thousands every day. The equipment to make these parts and moulds is expensive, thus the cost of the first hundred units is high.
- Because of limitations of how this technology works, one typically builds many small parts, which are later on assembled on an assembly line using unskilled labour or robots to build an entire system.
- Traditional manufacturing leads to high inventory costs of multiple parts that need to be produced and stored before being assembled.
- This makes the design phase complex and costly, rendering it expensive to redesign to correct initial mistakes or innovate to meet changing consumer needs.

#### **Advantages of additive manufacturing**

- In additive manufacturing, the physical object to be built is first designed in software. This design is fed to computerised machines, which build that object layer by layer.
- The technology is suitable for building the entire system in one go, with hollow interiors without assembly or interlocked parts.
- Changing features or tweaking shapes is a simple software change effected in minutes.
- Retooling of machines is not required and each unit can be customised.
- By eliminating the need to hold a large inventory of parts, set up an assembly line and purchase costly machines, adaptive manufacturing reduces capital and space requirements as well as the carbon footprint.

**Why India must adapt to additive manufacturing?**

Fortunately, this manufacturing paradigm has several features that play to the strengths of the Indian ecosystem.

- First, it eliminates large capital outlays. Machines are cheaper, inventories can be small and space requirements are not large. Thus, jump-starting manufacturing does not face the massive hurdle of large capital requirement and the traditional small and medium enterprises can easily be adapted and retooled towards high technology manufacturing.
- Second, the Indian software industry is well-established, and plans to increase connectivity are well under way as part of 'Digital India'. This would allow for the creation of manufacturing facilities in small towns and foster industrial development outside of major cities.
- Third, it is possible to build products that are better suited for use in harsh environmental conditions. Products that required assembly of fewer parts also implies that they may be better able to withstand dust and moisture prevalent in our tropical environment and be more durable.
- Fourth, in a country where use-and-throw is an anathema, maintaining old products is far easier because parts can be manufactured as needed and product life-cycles can be expanded.
- Finally, maintaining uniform product quality is far easier because the entire system is built at the same time and assembly is not required.

**Conclusion**

For countries that have already invested in heavy manufacturing, this shift to adaptive manufacturing will be difficult and expensive. For new entrants, it is easier to leapfrog. For countries that have already invested in heavy manufacturing, this shift to adaptive manufacturing will be difficult and expensive. For new entrants, it is easier to leapfrog.

Reference: [The Hindu](#)

**22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2018**

**TOPIC- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests**

1. **Post-Cold War, as the world has become multipolar, do you believe that non-alignment is serving India's self-interest as much as it did during the Cold War? Substantiate your answer with suitable arguments.**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

India has traditionally refrained from choosing or aligning completely with one side as opposed to the other. This has given India manoeuvring capability to build strong ties with all major powers. But the global system today is vastly different.

**Relevance of non-alignment in the post cold war era**

- Today, the global community expects India to take a strong stand on global issues (often third-party ones) and even choose sides, if needed.
- For instance, both the US and Iran were looking for India's support during their tussle after the scrapping of Iran nuclear deal. But India refused to choose sides.
- During the Cold War, when the global system was largely bipolar in nature, India's leadership and skilful diplomacy made sure it didn't get trapped into bipolar politics and, as a solution, the Non-Aligned Movement was born.
- Post-Cold War, as the world has become multipolar, India's non-aligned credentials get questioned.
- Also, when a country's power and reputation increases in the global system, the world starts to expect it assumes greater responsibility.

- Until now, Indian diplomacy has been fairly successful in doing that, but the question is, for how long can India continue to move on this tried and tested path of deft diplomacy?

### Conclusion

Post-Cold War, the situation has become more interesting, as despite the US maintaining its hegemony, many countries have become regional powerhouses, the most important of them being China. India too should take a strong stand on global issues (often third-party ones) and even choose sides, if needed.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

### TOPIC- Internal Security

2. Do you agree with the view that connecting each school in sensitive areas of Jammu and Kashmir to a “sister” school in another part of the country can go a long way in contributing towards normalcy in the valley?

Ans:

#### Introduction

The recent spate of killings in the valley has again demonstrated how fragile peace in the valley is. Considering that the situation has shown no signs of improvement, critical analysis of the policy of Indian state in Kashmir is required.

#### How education can be used as a tool for easing tensions in the valley?

Connecting each school in sensitive areas of Jammu and Kashmir to a “sister” school in another part of the country can go a long way in contributing towards normalcy in the valley.

Increased interaction with peer groups will lead to richer exchange of ideas, experience of cultural integration, and a mutual respect for the differences in the two peer groups.

The exchange will also provide a sense of association and support to the schools involved.

Innovative activities should be designed to foster mutual understanding and cross-cultural interaction, such as letter or email exchanges, social media linkages, and telephone connectivity, which urge students to share their respective personal and cultural surroundings.

Providing enabling digital infrastructure facilities in every sensitive school in priority areas in the state can have an enormous impact.

Further, there is lack of sufficient connectivity and integration in schools in Jammu and Kashmir. These facilities are enablers for implementing interventions such as the school-linkage programme, the virtual exchange programme, and the provision of e-learning content for students.

23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2018

### TOPIC: Social Empowerment

1. Menstruation taboos are exacting a huge cost from women. Explain.

#### Introduction

The fight against menstruation taboos has just become about women’s right to life and liberty as guaranteed by the Constitution. India’s women have a bigger battle to fight on menstruation. The taboos about menstruation present in many societies impact on girls’ and women’s emotional state, mentality and lifestyle and most importantly, health. No wonder this was the cause of death of girl in Tamil Nadu when the cyclone Gaja hit the state.

#### How women suffer from menstruation taboos?



- In India, across socioeconomic classes, girls are often considered impure, contaminated, and dirty when they menstruate. This manifests in severe exclusion, segregation, curtailed movements, and dietary restrictions for young girls and women.
- Many women suffer from hygiene neglect during their menstruation cycle of the month thus making them vulnerable to infection and hence various kinds of fatal diseases. Reproductive tract infections are 70% more common in women who have inadequate access to menstrual hygiene products.
- Due to lack of knowledge and understanding many girls have to drop out schools and colleges. Ultimately they lose opportunity to join the workforce. It also leads to child marriage in many cases. In addition to this, the monthly menstruation period also creates obstacles for female teachers
- Many girls and women are subject to restrictions in their daily lives simply because they are menstruating. Not entering the “puja” room is the major restriction among urban girls whereas, not entering the kitchen is the main restriction among the rural girls during menstruation.
- Poor protection and inadequate washing facilities may increase susceptibility to infection, with the odor of menstrual blood putting girls at risk of being stigmatized. The latter may have significant implications for their mental health.

### Conclusion

Initiatives must be taken to spread awareness and do away with the myths and taboos associated with menstruation as it deprives women of their very basic rights. Menstruation is nothing but a very normal biological phenomenon, and adolescent girls and women should understand that they have the power of procreation only because of this virtue.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

**TOPIC: Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.**

**2. The PM’s clarion call of ‘Start-up India, Stand up India’ highlights the multiplier effect startups can have for the economy. Suggest measures to improve the status of start ups in our country.**

### Introduction

Start ups seem to have their direct impact on fostering creativity and innovation in our country. They have also emerged as the top career option for many graduates from leading business and tech schools. They are new avenues for creating wealth, while generating employment. But many start ups have failed in the last few years, the highest number being recorded in e-commerce and food technology.

### Measures to improve the status of start ups

- The financing ecosystem needs to develop comprising of incubators providing appropriate technology and hardware systems, effective mentoring, access to easy finance, assistance in the marketing of products and services, etc.
- The marketing strategy needs to improve and efforts must be made to deal with the issue of product mistiming.
- The gaps in the team must be worked upon and the spirit of healthy competition must be encouraged.
- The startup needs to understand the market need of the economy. To address this issue, a novel approach is to link them with large corporate houses in allied business areas. They would become an integral part of the supply chain and devise newer technologies for better efficiency or productivity. In due course of time, corporates may also invest substantially in these startups, helping them stand on their feet.

### Conclusion

Such a dedicated corporate connect with the startups will go a long way in helping ideas germinate into appropriate end-uses and ensuring the success rates of startuppreneurs. On an encouraging note, many companies have already signed on to such a programme to strengthen the startup ecosystem.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

24<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

**TOPIC- India and its bilateral relations**

1. **Despite their proximity, physical and cultural, the strategic distance between Delhi and Jakarta has been incredibly vast. What can be the major areas of cooperation in the India-Indonesia relations?**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Despite their proximity, physical and cultural, the strategic distance between Delhi and Jakarta has been incredibly vast.

Barring a brief moment in the mid 20th century, when anti-colonial solidarity brought them together, modern India and Indonesia have barely figured in each other's mental maps.

**Why relationship went bad?**

A variety of internal, regional and global political developments widened the political gulf between India and Indonesia.

**Ideology:-**

If the domestic threat from Communism drove Jakarta decisively to the right from the late 1960s, India entered into a prolonged alliance with left wing politics and economics.

**NAM:-**

After Bandung, India turned its back on Asia and focused on the non-aligned movement. Indonesia moved towards the minor variant of Asianism in South East Asia.

**Soviet Union:-**

India drifted towards a de-facto alliance with the Soviet Union, Indonesia feared Communist Russia and emphasised partnerships with the US and Japan.

**Little maritime business:-**

Although India and Indonesia have a shared sea frontier in the Indian Ocean, there was little maritime business between the two.

**Why do they need to come together?**

Modi and Widodo want their nations to emerge as major maritime powers to ensure a stable maritime order in the region, one that is under stress because of China's rapid rise and America's growing reluctance to be the sole guarantor of regional security.

Where India is worried about the security of the sea lanes of communication in the larger Indo-Pacific area, Indonesia has been concerned about Chinese maritime intrusions near the Natuna islands, which it claims as part of its exclusive economic zone, as well as Chinese attempts in the past to include the island chain in its territorial maps.

**What can be the areas of cooperation?**

- Against the backdrop of the rapidly changing security agenda facing the two nations, they have also now agreed to focus on their defense and security ties in order to jointly combat terrorism and organized crime.
- Their joint statement condemned terrorism in all forms, underscoring "zero tolerance" for acts of terrorism. It asked all nations to work towards eliminating terrorist safe havens and infrastructure, disrupting terrorist networks and their financing channels and stopping cross-border terrorism.
- In a message to China, which has been blocking India's move to get Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar designated a global terrorist, the two nations called upon all countries to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 (banning militant groups and their leaders) and other resolutions designating terrorist entities.

- The two nations also underline the need to combat and eliminate “illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing” and recognized transnational organized fisheries crime as one of the emerging crimes which needs to be tackled on an urgent basis.
- India and Indonesia have been gradually enhancing their security and political ties. The two signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2005 that started an annual strategic dialogue.
- The next year, they ratified a defense cooperation agreement, initially signed in 2001, which focused on areas of defense supplies and technology, as well as on joint projects.
- The two have signed an extradition treaty and also a “mutual legal assistance treaty” for gathering and exchanging information to enforce their laws.
- Joint naval exercises and patrols, and regular port calls by their respective navies, have become a regular feature of the India-Indonesia relationship in recent years. India has also become a major source of military hardware for Jakarta.

### Conclusion

Such cooperation is a natural result of geography. Indonesia’s location, combined with its naval forces, allows it to work effectively with India to ensure security in the sea lanes of communication between Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia. Together, they control the entry point from the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean to the Strait of Malacca. Similarities in democratic governing systems and broad foreign-policy outlooks have helped dramatically: Viewing India’s maritime presence as benign, Indonesia has openly invited India to help littoral states in the region maintain the Strait’s security.

Reference: [The Diplomat](#)

**TOPIC- Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life; Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment**

## 2. What is green technology? Where does India stand in this green race?

Ans:

### Introduction

Humanity is slipping into a precarious position as the environment degrades. Noxious air pollution, the collapse of natural food systems and extreme weather events have demonstrated the urgency to find cleaner forms of growth. Green technology is one of the ways of dealing with this menace.

### What is green technology?

- The term "technology" refers to the application of knowledge for practical purposes.
- The field of "green technology" encompasses a continuously evolving group of methods and materials, from techniques of generating energy to non-toxic cleaning products.
- It refers to the technology that is considered environmental friendly based on its production process or supply chain; a means of energy production that is less harmful to the environment as compared to the traditional ways of generating energy.
- Examples of green technology include green buildings, green chemistry, green nanotechnology etc.

### Where does India stand?

- India has a sizable industry in low-carbon environmental goods and services (LCEGS) and the third-highest LCEGS sales in Asia (second highest in terms of proportion of GDP).
- India’s patent basket has a higher share of certain green tech when compared to the world average reflecting an innovation specialization. India’s share of patents in water-related adaptation technologies is four times higher than the world average.
- In trade, India specialises in smart grids, wind energy, hydel and biofuels. In India’ export basket, the share of wind energy is 1.7 times the world average and the share of smart grid technologies is over double the world average

- India enjoys 10 GW of wind turbine manufacturing capacity, which is three times higher than domestic demand, providing an export-growth window. It also has domestic scale in wind, with the fourth largest installed capacity in the world.
- Apart from being a founding-member, India plays a significant role in the International Solar Alliance in terms of being a host as well as a major contributor to the achievement of the target. International Solar Alliance is an alliance of countries with the primary objective to work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) is a comprehensive action plan of India which outlines measures on climate change related adaptation and mitigation while simultaneously focusing on development.

### Conclusion

India needs to focus on developing clean industries especially because they can address water and air pollution issues, which are fated to become worse. The pollution issue is not just an inconvenient by-product but also a fundamental threat to growth and the very existence of humanity.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

**26<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

### ***TOPIC- Urbanization, their problems and their remedies***

1. **Despite large budgets and fleets of officials, crises such as acute water scarcity and hopeless traffic jams haunt almost all Indian cities. What in your opinion has gone wrong? What can be done to improve planning in Indian cities?**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

Despite large budgets and fleets of officials, crises such as acute water scarcity and hopeless traffic jams haunt almost all Indian cities. The statutory bodies entrusted with the responsibility of planning do not seem to recognise the enormity of this challenge. Nor do the colleges that claim to be imparting actionable knowledge of planning place planners at responsible positions.

#### **What has gone wrong?**

- Planning in India, and its education, differs from the West. The curriculum for budding planners does not infuse some of the most essential components of the systems theory of planning.
- It fails to enable the students of planning to answer basic questions like how to compute the number of buses a city's transportation system would require.
- The answers to these questions lie in the systems approach that absorbs mathematical modelling as a key ingredient in its recipe of planning.
- The backbone of the systems theory is the process of translating social, spatial and cultural desirables into mathematical models using computing, statistics, optimisation and an algorithmic way of formulating and solving problems.
- The early universities of the West which began to train professionals in planning, spawned some of the most ingenious planners, who were experts in these domains.

#### **Way forward**

- A famous analogy in planning is the one that compares a city with an organism, where both are conceived as a set of interconnected working components (or organs).
- For dealing with ailments, a well-trained doctor is the one who can understand organs, diagnose failures, and prescribe remedial measures.
- Our cities currently fall short of such doctors who can diagnose, analyse and prescribe.

- No other programme renders formal training that focuses upon empowering its graduates to answer the basic questions such as public transport needs or how districts are to be managed.
- Planning should be at the forefront of attempts to answer these questions.
- Assimilating the essential components of the systems theory of planning and establishing links with other areas of learning may open up new and crucial roles for planners.

Reference: [Indian Express](#)

**TOPIC- Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information; Challenges of corruption**

**2. Critically analyse the status of legal protection provided to the whistle –blowers and sources in India.**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

While the Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2014 (WBP Act), passed to protect the whistle-blowers, has not yet been notified, an amendment Bill has been introduced recently, seeming to dilute the original statute rather than strengthening it.

**Status of legal protection provided to whistle-blowers in India**

- At present, India has no law to regulate or protect the anonymity of any person who divulges top secret information to the journalists.
- The Press Council Act of 1978 does provide that no newspaper, news agency, editor or journalist will be compelled to disclose the source of any news or information published or reported by them to the Press Council of India (PCI), but this provision is only with respect to the PCI, which is a self-regulatory body.
- In addition, despite the Law Commission of India's recommendation that the source through which the information is received by a journalist should be given protection, India has not enacted any law to implement the same.
- The journalists and the media have no privilege protecting them from the obligation to disclose their source of information. Therefore, a source's identity is at all times at risk of being revealed.
- India fares even worse when it comes to protection of the information which may be communicated by the whistle-blowers through different means of technology. The lack of protection provided to the confidential sources is further accentuated by the lack of encryption laws in India.
- Also, the Draft Personal Data Protection Data Bill, 2018, may be step towards compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but it is completely deficient in providing specific provisions for protection of anonymity of sources or the information that may be given by users to the journalists.

**Conclusion**

With increased surveillance by the government, heightened risk of exposure due to data leak potential, the deficiency in our current information technology laws to give the whistle-blowers or sources adequate protection and the WBP Act still not being enforced, it is imperative that policy-makers draw their attention to strengthening the WBP Act and provide legal protection to the whistle-blowers and sources.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

**27<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

**TOPIC: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation**

- 1. SBM's focus has been on improving access to toilets, however, the same focus has not been given to management beyond the toilet. What are the challenges and elaborate on means to deal with the same.**

### Introduction

A sustainable sanitation ecosystem includes not only access to toilets, but also effective evacuation, transport, and treatment of waste along with reuse or responsible disposal of the treated product. Human waste largely goes untreated and ends up in the environment, posing significant threat to water sources and human health.

### What are the challenges?

- Billions of dollars are required to build, operate and maintain piped sewerage networks and treatment plants.
- In addition there is need of water for flushing and transporting the waste.
- Lack of funders to invest in innovative sanitation solutions along the waste management continuum to bridge the gap between the challenges and opportunities.
- Lack of supportive regulatory and policy framework that includes requirements for desludging, transport of waste to treatment plants, and environmentally sound treatment, reuse and disposal.

### The Way Forward

- Non-sewered sanitation solutions are known to be considerably less expensive than sewered solutions and work with existing waste collection infrastructure. Furthermore, novel, transformative sanitation technologies are being developed that do not require connection to a sewerage network.
- Many of these technologies treat and reuse flush water on-site and require little to no grid electricity or water for operations.
- Human waste can be converted into useful byproducts, including fuel, fertiliser, and irrigation water.
- There is a need for public, private and other funders to invest in innovative sanitation solutions.
- Specifically, the GoI should consider taking additional actions such as adopting the new international standard for non-sewered sanitation systems; helping to de-risk new technologies through supported pilot projects; rolling out policy incentives for creating useful byproducts from human waste; and developing policies to regularise waste collection and transport to ensure consistent flow of material to new treatment plants.

### Conclusion

The human waste management sector has the potential to create jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities as well. For instance, microenterprises could be set up to collect and transport waste and various entities could invest in waste treatment or waste-to-energy plants, capturing the value of byproducts.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

**TOPIC:** *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

## 2. In light of the recent trend of pharma companies managing to get away with shoddy standards and dubious practices, critically analyze the regulation of medical devices in India.

### Introduction

Recently reports have come forth claiming the fact that Indian market is being plied with poor quality and over-priced medical devices puts forth some alarming details. There has been a steady increase in device-related complications in patients who received implants. The lack of strong regulation, has let pharma companies like Johnson & Johnson (J&J), Medtronic, etc, flout standards that are mandatory in many developed jurisdictions and indulge in practices that are outlawed in these jurisdictions.

### What is wrong with the regulation of medical devices in India?

- The Indian regulatory architecture—involving the IPC that maintains data pertaining to adverse events and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) that is the drugs and devices standards

regulator—has failed to make public the details of devices recalled from the Indian market. This shows the grim picture of poor regulation related to medical devices.

- There are many other regulatory gaps—with standards of adverse-event reporting poor to begin with and the culture of reporting still to get a steady foothold, the reports themselves are of poor quality.
- A big part of the problem is that the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has not posted scientific associates at the monitoring centres as required.
- There is also very poor reporting from the metros where the bulk of device-implants would likely be taking place, with doctors and surgeons averse to reporting malfunction.
- The regulatory focus has mainly been on the prices where as the issue is of poor quality.

### Conclusion

The medical device certification policy needs to be made strict. The government should incentivize people to come up with innovative ideas and to increase funding. Adequate funds should be allocated for research and innovation in this area. The government should further provide tax incentives to encourage entrepreneurs in this sector.

Reference: [Financial Express](#)

28<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

### **TOPIC- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life**

**1. India needs to rapidly adapt to, embrace and drive change if it wishes to stay relevant in the global healthcare order. Discuss.**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

The world as we know it is changing so fast and so much. Healthcare is no stranger to change — in fact, the most impactful transformations in human life have happened in healthcare. India needs to rapidly adapt to, embrace and drive change if it wishes to continuously lower the cost of healthcare.

#### **How technology has transformed the mechanics of care delivery?**

- By leapfrogging through smart adoption of technology and using emerging platforms such as Blockchain, significant improvements are possible in healthcare operations and costs.
- Telemedicine has already brought healthcare to the remotest corners of the country.
- The use of artificial intelligence for preventive and predictive health analytics can strongly support clinical diagnosis with evidence-based guidance, and also prevent disease.
- From the virtual reality (VR) of 3D-printing, we are now moving towards augmented reality (AR), by which, for example, every piece of node in a malignant melanoma can be completely removed, thereby eliminating the risk of the cancer spreading to any other part of the body.
- Biotechnology, cell biology and genetics are opening up whole new paradigms of understanding of human life and disease, and have made personalised medicine a way of life.

#### **What does India need to do?**

- India needs to rapidly adapt to, embrace and drive change if it wishes to stay relevant in the global healthcare order.
- India's change imperative has become even more pronounced with the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana Abhiyan, or National Health Protection Mission (NHPM), under the ambit of Ayushman Bharat.
- We need to achieve a balance between staying at the cutting edge of clinical protocols, technology and innovation and continue to deliver world-class care, while finding increasingly efficient ways of operating to continuously lower the cost of care and bring it within the reach of those who cannot afford it.

- This is a difficult balance to achieve, but not impossible.

### Conclusion

India needs to a long way to avail the benefits. This is a difficult but not impossible. And when accomplished, India would have found an answer that can be an example for the rest of the world to emulate.

Reference: [The Hindu](#)

### **TOPIC- Role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges**

**2. Discuss the threats posed by social media platforms in the present world. Why is it difficult to deal with the same? Suggest suitable measures.**

**Ans:**

#### Introduction

The importance of social media is well known to all of us. It has proved helpful in many ways. However we cannot ignore the negative aspects of social media in our society. The threats posed by social media are turning out to be so serious and we need to think of ways to deal with it.

#### Threats posed by social media platforms

- The circulation of fake news is one big threat that the social media is coming up with these days. This has led to mob lynching at several places.
- Online snooping and misuse of data available online is another major threat.
- Cases of online harassment and trolling have also increased over the years.
- New forms of crimes like online child grooming, revenge porn etc have come up.
- Hacking and online fraud are yet another serious issues.
- Spread of terrorism, regionalism and communalism.
- Using social media can make a person more vulnerable to predators and cyber bullying.
- The privacy of individuals is often threatened.
- Incidents involving the security failure of a third-party contractor, fraud by employees, cyber espionage, and network intrusion appear to be the most damaging for large enterprises and is a serious threat to the economy.
- Hate spreading is another major issue.

#### Why is it difficult to deal with them?

- The amount of data and traffic are so huge that it becomes difficult to regulate the social media platforms.
- There is a dearth of digital literacy among the masses.
- There is difficulty in prosecution and tracking of crime due to jurisdiction problems and anonymity offered by the internet
- The regulation of social media would impose restrictions on business and various government schemes which make use of social media platforms would also be affected.
- The number of internet users is very large and it keeps on increasing.
- There is also difficulty of jurisdiction (data is shared across borders).

#### How to deal with it?

- Expansion of digital literacy is one of the most effective ways to deal with it.
- The government and social media platforms should work in close collaboration to deal with the issue.
- Rules of data protection and privacy should be made strict.
- Cyber security cell and IT organizations must be strengthened.
- Government must make full use of Artificial Intelligence in dealing with the problem.
- People should be made aware of things like fake news and hate messages.



- Punishment and penalty for violators and those involved in spreading fake news and hate messages.
- There should be international consensus with respect to easier Extradition and prosecution of Cyber criminals.

### Conclusion

Internet and social media have helped us in many ways and they will continue to do so provided we use these social media platforms in a more responsible manner. Technological advancements are meant to take the society forward and we should never use these in such a way that we are pulled back.

**29<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

### **TOPIC- Role of women; Social Empowerment**

- 1. Women and girls are the subject of an overwhelming share of intimate partner/family-related homicides. Suggest a way forward to combat all forms of violence against women.**

**Ans:**

#### Introduction

The most dangerous place for women in the world is their home—often, with their partner—according to a UN report on gender-related killings of women and girls. Women are, to a much larger extent, subjected to lethal and fatal victimisation as a result of skewed and inequitable gender norms and standards.

#### Suggestions to combat all forms of violence against women

- Combatting this requires more than just legal changes and amendments to the criminal justice system—it needs a change in entrenched societal behaviour and norms, behavioural interventions that specifically target gender norms, and the tackling of violent and toxic masculinity.
- For instance, despite the Union government outlawing the payment of dowry in 1961 and the criminalisation of any harassment perpetuated by the male partner's family in 1986, between 1999 and 2016, on average, between 40% to 50% of all female homicides recorded in India by the National Crime Records Bureau were due to dowry.
- An example of an effective and replicable intervention can be found in the Bahamas, where the 'Healthy Teen Relationship Campaign' sought to educate teenagers on sexual consent, healthy and open forms of communication with their loved ones, and the creation of awareness of different types of abuse, be it sexual, emotional or physical.

#### Conclusion

To eliminate violence against women in all forms, therefore, coordinated, multi-agency efforts— from judicial systems to the police to wellness and rehabilitation centres—are needed as well as imparting sensitisation via education. There also need to be laws that provide adequate redressal and hold men accountable for their actions.

**Reference:** [Financial Express](#)

### **TOPIC- Women and related issues**

- 2. Critically examine Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and throw light on the status of its implementation.**

**Ans:**

#### Introduction

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a Maternity Benefit Programme that is implemented in all the districts of the country in accordance with the provision of the National Food Security Act, 2013. It aims at providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child.

#### Critical examination of PMMVY

- The PMMVY was announced on December 31, 2016. Unfortunately, it violates the NFSA in several ways. First, the benefits have been reduced from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 5,000 per child. Second, they are now restricted to the first living child. Third, they are further restricted to women above the age of 18 years.
- The scheme largely defeats the purpose it is supposed to serve: according to a recent analysis, it excludes more than half of all pregnancies because first-order births account for only 43% of all births in India.

### **Status of its implementation**

- The application process is cumbersome and exclusionary: a separate form has to be filled, signed and submitted for each of the three instalments, along with a copy of the applicant's mother-child protection card, her Aadhaar card, her husband's Aadhaar card, and the details of a bank account linked to her Aadhaar number.
- The compulsory linking of the applicant's bank account with Aadhaar often causes problems.
- Further, the PMMVY provides little assistance to women who lose their baby, because the successive payments are made only if the corresponding conditionalities are met.
- Even in this restricted form, the scheme is yet to reach eligible women as the implementation record has been dismal till date.

### **Conclusion**

The provision for maternity entitlements in the NFSA is very important for women who are not employed in the formal sector. There is an urgent need for better implementation as well as for compliance of the scheme with the NFSA. Maternity benefits should be raised to Rs. 6,000 per child at least, for all pregnancies and not just the first living child.

**Reference:** [The Hindu](#)

**30<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

### **Topic- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies**

1. **Discuss the pros and cons of delivering food subsidy through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme.**

**Ans:**

#### **Introduction**

Despite the tall claims of success of Aadhaar in preventing the leakage of government subsidies, it is not being used for enabling cash transfer of major subsidies. Direct benefit transfer (DBT) of food subsidy has not even been seriously tried even though subsidies on food and fertiliser account for the highest amounts in the union budget.

#### **Pros of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of food subsidy**

- It would reduce leakages by cancellation of bogus cards and eliminating under-weightment of grains.
- Middlemen will be eliminated. Hence leakages will be reduced.
- As Aadhar card is based on biometric identification, fake & duplicate beneficiaries will be eliminated.
- DBT scheme allows time-bound transfers hence avoids delays in transferring money.
- The problem of food grains storage and spoilage in the process can be eliminated.
- Circulation of money will be increased, which can lead to a significant increase in the GDP.

#### **Cons of DBT of food subsidy**

- We are not about to reach a stage, even in the next five years, where DBT can fully replace distribution of foodgrains.
- Secondly, the procured grains can always be released under the open market sale scheme.
- A problem with DBT is that the cash received may not be enough to buy wheat or rice after adding the beneficiary's share of Rs 2/3 per kg as the market rate may be higher.

**Conclusion**

Though there are some loopholes involved in Direct Benefit Transfer scheme, this program is an excellent way to ensure that every paisa reach the deserving beneficiaries, if carefully implemented.

Reference: [Livemint](#)  
[The Tribune](#)

**Topic- India and its bilateral relations**

**2. Do you agree with the view that India should open up as a key energy market for the U.S and cut off its ties with Iran?**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Recently, US granted six months waiver to India and seven other countries importing oil from Iran. The waiver shows that Washington and New Delhi will cooperate on India's oil and gas needs. Indeed, their Strategic Energy Partnership sees energy cooperation serving "as a centerpiece in the bilateral relationship".

**Should India open up as a key energy market for the US?**

- India should entertain no illusions about the Trump administration's wish that it should open up as a key energy market for the U.S.
- Boasts about America's energy dominance ignore the interdependent nature of today's global energy market, and of relations between states.
- Friendly ties with a politically stable Iran undoubtedly suit India.
- Unsurprisingly, India needs the help of both the U.S. and Iran.
- The U.S. is India's main strategic partner. Indeed, American naval power is indispensable for preserving maritime freedom and security in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

**Should India cut off its ties with Iran?**

- India's cooperation with Iran has to be seen against the broader context of its regional rivalries with Pakistan and China. India and Iran share regional interests.
- They could build a strategic partnership focussing on Afghanistan, Central Asia and West Asia.
- Together with Russia and some other countries, they are signatories to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) agreement, using Iran as the trade route to Russia and northern Europe. INSTC transit routes enable India to bypass a hostile Pakistan by exporting goods via the sea.
- That is why India has been developing the Chabahar port in southern Iran in a strategic bid to connect to Central Asia through Iran and Afghanistan. Chabahar provides war-torn Afghanistan a crucial link to Indian goods and Iranian oil.

**Conclusion**

Admittedly, India remains opposed to Iran's alleged efforts to acquire nuclear weapon capability. A nuclear Iran would disrupt the balance of power across West and Central Asia, with serious consequences for India's economic and strategic interests. But a stronger relationship with Iran would increase India's influence in West and Central Asia. That could help to counter China. And a friendly U.S. could then approach Iran on nuclear issues through India's good offices.

Reference: [The Hindu](#)