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MCQs

THE HINDU

Employment guarantee has slipped into limbo

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

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

Context

- The transition from **MGNREGA** to the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)** has been accompanied by a sharp decline in rural employment generation.

Key Highlights

- Employment generation under **MGNREGA** and **VB-G RAM G** fell by **43%** during **April-July 2026** compared with the average of the previous two years.
- Employment generation in **July 2026** is **expected to decline by over 40%** compared with July 2025.
- Employment generation declined in **all major States**, with a **60-85% decline in 10 of 19 major States**.
 - Employment generation nearly came to a standstill in **Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand** during April-July 2026.

- The transition from **MGNREGA** to **VB-G RAM G** caused administrative confusion and disrupted the opening of new works in several districts.
- Although VB-G RAM G was planned to replace MGNREGA from **April 1, 2026**, its final Rules were released only around the end of June.
 - The **Rules were not ready**, so **MGNREGA continued by default**.
- The **Union Budget allocated ₹95,692 crore** for VB-G RAM G in **2026-27**, slightly higher than MGNREGA's actual expenditure in 2025-26.
 - Including **State contributions**, total spending on VB-G RAM G is expected to reach around **₹1.5 lakh crore**.
- The **₹300 daily minimum wage** under VB-G RAM G is broadly similar to the earlier MGNREGA wage in real terms.

Implications

- The sharp fall in employment despite **higher allocations** raises concerns about **income security and implementation**.
- Reduced access to guaranteed employment could increase **rural distress and dependence on informal work**.
- Facial recognition at worksites and Center-State cost sharing** may create additional challenges for timely wage payments.
- Weak implementation could reduce the effectiveness of **rural employment as a social protection mechanism**.



- The disruption could weaken the role of **public employment programmes as a counter-cyclical support during periods of rural unemployment**.

Way Forward

- Ensure a **smooth transition** between employment programmes without disrupting ongoing rural works.
- Strengthen **administrative capacity** and ensure the timely release of funds to States and districts.
- Ensure **timely wage payments** and minimise technological barriers for rural workers.
- Regularly monitor employment generation to address **gaps in State-level implementation**.
- Ensure that the new framework continues to provide **reliable employment and income security** to rural households.

Mains Question

The transition from MGNREGA to VB-G RAM G has raised concerns over rural employment generation and implementation capacity. Discuss the major challenges and suggest measures to ensure effective rural employment security. (150 Words)

A vision for an inclusive Bangladesh

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Why in Focus?

- Bangladesh's **July Uprising of 2024** marked a major political transition and reflected a longer struggle for democracy. The post-uprising government has focused on **democratic governance, minority rights, social inclusion and accountable institutions**.

Key Highlights

- The July Uprising was presented as the

outcome of a **long democratic struggle**, with demands centred on democracy, human rights, freedom of speech and the rule of law.

- The government has emphasised that **all citizens should enjoy equal political, religious, cultural and social rights**, irrespective of religion, ethnicity or ideology.
- Greater attention is being given to **minority representation and protection**, including representation of Hindu, Christian and indigenous communities in public institutions.
- The government seeks to connect the **legacy of the 1971 Liberation War** with the democratic aspirations of the **2024 uprising**, treating both as important parts of Bangladesh's national journey.
- Domestic priorities include **education, healthcare, employment, social welfare and human development**, along with sustainable development and environmental protection.
- In foreign policy, Bangladesh advocates a **"Bangladesh First" approach**, based on sovereign equality, mutual respect, non-interference and national dignity.
- Bangladesh also seeks stronger **regional cooperation through SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)** and friendly relations with neighbouring countries.

SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) was established in **1985 through the Dhaka Declaration** to promote regional cooperation and development. It has **8 members - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Afghanistan**.

Implications

- **Democratic consolidation** requires credible elections, strong institutions, judicial independence and effective checks and balances.
- **Political polarisation** and competing interpretations of 1971 and 2024 could create divisions and weaken national consensus.
- **Minority protection** remains important because political instability, mob violence and communal tensions can threaten social harmony.
- **Institutional reforms** must go beyond



symbolic representation and ensure equal access to justice, political participation and public services.

- **Economic and climate challenges** may make it difficult to provide employment, welfare and sustainable development in a densely populated delta country.
- Political stability in Bangladesh has wider implications for **India-Bangladesh relations, regional connectivity, trade and South Asian security**.

Way Forward

- Strengthen **democratic institutions, electoral processes, judicial independence and parliamentary oversight**.
- Ensure effective protection of **religious and ethnic minorities** and take strict action against mob violence and hate crimes.
- Promote **political dialogue and consensus-building** to reduce polarisation and ensure a peaceful democratic transition.
- Combine economic growth with **employment generation, social welfare, quality education, healthcare and climate-resilient development**.
- Strengthen **regional cooperation through SAARC and bilateral partnerships** while maintaining a balanced and mutually respectful foreign policy.

Mains Question

“The consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh has implications beyond its domestic politics.” Examine the challenges before Bangladesh in building an inclusive and stable democratic order and discuss its significance for South Asian regional cooperation. (15 marks, 250 words)

Bihar’s alcohol ban has been a success for social wellness, data show

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to

planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Why in Focus?

- A report titled ‘**Macro Perspective of Bihar’s Development Achievements, Unfinished Agenda, and the Way Forward**’ recommended lifting Bihar’s alcohol ban.

‘**Macro Perspective of Bihar’s Development Achievements, Unfinished Agenda, and the Way Forward**’ was prepared by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), in collaboration with the NITI Aayog.

- However, the **editorial argues that this recommendation overlooks evidence on violence against women, public health and the broader social costs of alcohol consumption**.

Key Highlights

- An **increase in reported crimes against women does not necessarily indicate an increase in actual violence**, as better reporting, awareness, legal aid and policing can increase recorded cases.
- **Total crimes against women are a broad indicator**; intimate partner violence and alcohol-related violence are more relevant for assessing the impact of the alcohol ban.
- **The ban substantially reduced intimate partner violence in Bihar**, with a 2024 Lancet Regional Health study estimating that it prevented over 21 lakh cases of violence.
- Studies have **also found reductions in hypertension, diabetes and obesity among men**, including an estimated prevention of around 18 lakh cases of overweight/obesity.
- **The loss of alcohol revenue should be assessed against the long-term benefits of improved health, productivity, safety and social wellbeing**.

Implications

- **Better reporting of crimes may create a misleading perception** that violence against women has increased despite actual improvements.
- **The alcohol ban can contribute to better**



public health, reduced violence and improved household wellbeing.

- **Focusing only on revenue loss may overlook the wider economic costs** of alcohol-related health problems, violence and productivity losses.
- A shift from prohibition to regulated alcohol control could help balance public health objectives with revenue and enforcement concerns.

Way Forward

- **Use causal and evidence-based studies to assess the actual impact** of the alcohol ban.
- **Explore balanced alternatives such as regulated availability, rationing, taxation and strict enforcement.**
- **Strengthen addiction treatment, mental-health services,** public awareness and rehabilitation.
- **Balance revenue considerations with the long-term costs of alcohol-related health and social harms.**

Mains Question

“Banning alcohol should be evaluated not merely in terms of revenue loss, but through its wider public health and social consequences. Discuss with reference to Bihar.” (250 Words)

What drives corporate investment?

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

Why in Focus?

- **Corporate investment as a share of India's GDP has declined** significantly since 2016.
- The editorial examines the factors behind this **prolonged decline and argues that weak demand and low business confidence, rather than merely high interest costs,** are key

constraints on investment.

Corporate investment refers to the spending by businesses on productive assets such as factories, machinery, equipment, technology and infrastructure to increase their production capacity and future profits.

Key Highlights

- **Corporate investment rose sharply during 2004–08 but declined after the Global Financial Crisis** and again after **demonetisation in 2016**, with the latter decline proving more persistent.
- **Investment decisions depend mainly on expected profitability, confidence about future returns** and the cost of credit.
- **Demonetisation weakened business confidence and profitability expectations** and adversely affected investment, particularly among MSMEs.
- **Smaller firms face greater credit constraints and higher interest costs, while larger firms** are more likely to be constrained by market demand rather than access to finance.
- **Lower interest rates and corporate tax cuts may have limited impact when firms lack sufficient demand** for their products, explaining why investment remained weak despite such measures.

Implications

- Merely **reducing borrowing costs may not be sufficient to revive investment** when firms face **weak demand and profitability expectations.**
- **Small firms** require **better access to affordable credit** as financing constraints disproportionately affect their investment capacity.
- **Corporate tax cuts and monetary easing** may have **limited expansionary effects** if businesses remain uncertain about future demand.
- **Sustained government expenditure** can **stimulate demand, improve profitability expectations and encourage investment across firms of different sizes.**

Way Forward

- **Increase productive public expenditure to create demand** and crowd in private investment.
- **Strengthen domestic demand through employment generation** and higher household purchasing power.
- **Improve access to affordable and reliable credit for MSMEs** and smaller firms.
- **Maintain policy stability and predictability to strengthen business confidence and long-term investment** expectations.

Mains Question

“Private corporate investment depends not merely on the cost of capital but also on demand and expectations of future profitability. Discuss in the context of India.” (250 Words)

KEYWORDS

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** is a permanent and independent international criminal court.
- The **ICC was established through the Rome Statute**, which came into force on 1 July 2002.
- It **has jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression**.
- The **ICC is complementary to national criminal jurisdictions and acts as a court of last resort** when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute.
- Additionally, the ICC serves a different purpose than the International Court of Justice, which resolves conflicts between nations.
- There **are 125 member countries (China, India, Israel, Russia, and the United States are not ICC parties)**.
- The Court is funded by contributions from the States Parties and by voluntary contributions from Governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations, and other entities.

Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC)

- **Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell is an attached office of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).**

- It was **established on 1 April 2002 after the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM)**.
- **PPAC maintains a comprehensive database of India's oil and gas sector, covering production, consumption, imports, exports and petroleum infrastructure.**
- It **monitors and analyses trends in crude oil, petroleum product and natural gas prices and provides technical inputs** to the government for policymaking.
- It **assists the government in administering certain subsidy schemes, including subsidies related to PDS kerosene, domestic LPG and freight for far-flung areas.**
- It **also analyses domestic and international energy markets and forecasts petroleum import and export trends**, supporting India's energy-sector planning and policy formulation.

Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund)

- **The PM CARES Fund was established in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies.**
- It is registered as a **Public Charitable Trust**.



- The **Prime Minister** is the **ex-officio Chairman**, while the **Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs and Finance** are **ex-officio Trustees**.
- The Fund provides **relief and assistance** during **public health emergencies, natural disasters and other calamities**, whether **man-made or natural**.
- It can support **healthcare, pharmaceutical and other essential infrastructure**, along with **relevant research**.
- It can provide **financial assistance, grants and other support** to affected people and undertake activities consistent with its **objectives**.

Influenza H1N1 (Swine Flu)

- **H1N1 (Swine flu)** is a **viral respiratory infection** caused by the **Influenza A virus**.
- It is called **swine flu** because it resembles a respiratory infection found in **pigs**.
- H1N1 spreads mainly through **person-to-person transmission**.
- Common symptoms include **fever or chills, cough, sore throat, runny or blocked nose, headache, tiredness, and muscle or body aches**.
- **Antiviral medicines** are most effective when started within **48 hours** of the first symptoms and can **shorten illness** and reduce the **risk of complications**.

Taittiriya Upanishad

- Classified as a **primary (Mukhya) Upanishad**, it belongs to the **Taittiriya school of the Krishna Yajur Veda** and is believed to have been composed around the **6th century BCE**.
- The text is structurally divided into three distinct sections called **Vallis**: the **Shiksha Valli** (dealing with phonetics, ethical conduct, and student life), the **Brahmananda Valli** (explaining the bliss

of ultimate reality), and the **Bhriгу Valli** (detailing Sage Bhriгу's philosophical journey to self-realization).

- It introduces the significant Vedantic doctrine of **Pancha Kosha (Five Sheaths)**, which analyzes human existence through five layers: the physical body (**Annamaya**), vital breath (**Pranamaya**), mind (**Manomaya**), intellect (**Vijnanamaya**), and the innermost layer of bliss (**Anandamaya**).
- A central theme of the text is encapsulated in the profound aphorism **"Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma"** (**Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity**), teaching that the ultimate purpose of human life is to progress from basic materialism to **pure consciousness and bliss**.

Doctrine of Proportionality

- Originating in **European administrative law**, particularly in **Germany**, it is a legal principle ensuring that the means a government uses to achieve a goal are **no more drastic than necessary**-often summarized as **"do not use a cannon to shoot a sparrow."**
- The doctrine was firmly institutionalized in **Indian constitutional jurisprudence** through the landmark **K.S. Puttaswamy (Right to Privacy) judgment (2017)**, which made it a standard for balancing **state intervention against fundamental rights**.
- Courts evaluate government actions using a **four-pronged test**: the action must be **legally sanctioned**, serve a **legitimate state aim**, have a **rational connection** to that aim, and be the **least restrictive alternative** available.
- It serves as a crucial **judicial check against arbitrary executive power**, marking a shift where courts do not just ask whether the government had the authority to act, but actively examine whether the **severity of the action was justified** by the problem it aimed to solve