FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

> Mission Mausam   > Mental Wellness   > Aviation Industry in India

FWD
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EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you guage your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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WOMEN IN POWER

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MISSION MAUSAM

Syllabus: GS I - Important Geophysical Phenomena

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *How far do you agree that the behaviour of the Indian monsoon has been changing due to humanising landscapes? Discuss.* *(2015)*

Q) *What characteristics can be assigned to the monsoon climate that succeeds in feeding more than 50 percent of the world population residing in Monsoon Asia?* *(2017)*

SHORT TAKES

➤ **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR):** Established on May 25, 1998, serves as India's nodal organisation for coordinating the Indian Antarctic Programme and maintaining the country's permanent stations in Antarctica. Located in Goa, NCPOR focuses on multidisciplinary polar science research, providing advanced facilities for scientific inquiry.

➤ **Rossby waves:** Typically found in the mid-latitude regions of the atmosphere, particularly within the upper troposphere where jet streams are located. They can also be observed in the ocean, affecting ocean currents and climate patterns.

WHY IN NEWS

Recently, Mission Mausam has garnered attention for enhancing weather forecasting and introducing weather management capabilities, such as controlling rainfall to mitigate floods or address droughts. This represents a significant shift from traditional forecasting to active weather management.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Summer Monsoon is a critical weather system that significantly influences agriculture and the economy. Recent research has uncovered a connection between the decline of Arctic sea ice and variations in monsoon patterns, highlighting the broader implications of climate change. Initiatives like Mission Mausam aim to enhance weather forecasting and management capabilities, offering potential solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of these changing climatic dynamics

MISSION MAUSAM OVERVIEW

Aim:

o An ambitious initiative aimed at **transforming India into a "Weather Ready" and "Climate Smart" nation** by improving weather forecasting infrastructure and exploring climate modification methods.

o To **enhance weather prediction accuracy by 5-10%**, with a focus on weather modification research.

Objectives:

o **Advanced Infrastructure:** Establish **50 Doppler Weather Radars (DWR), 60 RadioSonde/Radio Wind stations, 100 disdrometers, 10 marine automatic weather stations**, and an urban testbed to improve weather data collection.

o **High-Resolution Forecasting:** Focus on higher-resolution atmospheric observations to improve both spatial and temporal scales for more accurate and localised weather predictions.

o **Next-Generation Technology Development:**

Develop next-generation radars, satellites with advanced instrument payloads, and deploy high-performance computers (HPC) for enhanced data processing.

o **AI/ML-Based Weather Models:** Integrate artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) with physics-based numerical models to enhance forecasting accuracy and predictability.

o **Expansion of Research and Facilities:** Establish an ocean research station and additional advanced facilities to strengthen observational capabilities and climate research.

o **Weather Control Initiatives:** Focus on weather modification, such as setting up a cloud-simulation chamber at IITM to test cloud seeding and rainfall control.

o **Climate Resilience and Risk Mitigation:** Support India's broader efforts to mitigate climate change impacts and build community resilience through more accurate and timely weather data.

⚘ Budget:

- o Allocated Rs 2,000 crore for the next two years.
- o The budget for the second half of the Mission will be decided at a later stage.

⚘ Implementation:

- o The **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology** will lead the mission's implementation, ensuring the success of its objectives.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Pros	Challenges
✅ **Enhanced Data Dissemination:** Mission Mausam aims to improve the dissemination of weather data and services, ensuring that no weather event goes undetected.	✴ **Technological Limitations**: Engineering weather events, such as rainfall, has shown varying success in the past
✅ **Technological Upgrades:** Mission Mausam will include installing **supercomputers, dopplers, radars, wind profilers, and GIS-based systems** to enhance weather updates across different scales.	• **Example:** Countries like the USA, Canada, and China have had limited success with geoengineering, raising concerns about the potential for undesirable consequences like overflooding.
✅ **Improved Weather Services:** The initiative aims to deliver timely, accurate, and accessible weather services to all citizens, marking a significant step forward in India's climate preparedness	✴ **Technical Challenges**: Ensuring the reliability and calibration of new equipment might pose technical difficulties.
✅ **Economic and Social Benefits:** The mission will provide significant economic and social benefits by offering enhanced weather, climate, and natural hazard services to various sectors.	✴ **Maintenance and Operation**: Regular maintenance and operation of the expanded network will require additional resources and skilled personnel.
✅ **Weather Management:** It aims to develop capabilities for managing weather events, such as suppressing excessive rainfall or engineering rainfall in drought-prone areas.	✴ **Environmental Impact**: Weather modification techniques, like cloud-seeding, may have unforeseen environmental consequences.
✅ **Disaster Mitigation**: By managing rainfall, it could help prevent flooding or alleviate drought conditions.	✴ **Implementation Challenges:** Developing reliable weather management capabilities within five years may face technical and practical hurdles.
✅ **Future Capabilities**: The program may eventually extend to managing other weather events, like lightning.	✴ **Resource Intensive**: Weather management initiatives may require significant investment in technology and research.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Importance of Caution:** The need for checks and balances is crucial to avoid negative effects from experimenting with evolving weather technologies.

✳ **Pilot Projects and Risk Assessment**: Implement small-scale pilot projects to test cloud-seeding and weather-modification techniques, accompanied by comprehensive risk assessments to monitor potential adverse effects like overflooding or ecosystem disruption.

✳ **Strengthening Research and Collaboration:** Expand interdisciplinary research on weather modification techniques, involving collaboration with international institutions that have experience in geoengineering.

✳ **Public Awareness and Policy Framework:** Develop clear regulatory frameworks and engage with local communities to ensure that weather interventions align with environmental sustainability.

ARCTIC SEA ICE AND CHANGE IN MONSOON PATTERNS

➡ **Collaboration**: A study by **India's National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) and South Korea's Korea Polar Research Institute** found a link between Arctic sea ice changes and the Indian monsoon.

　o The research, published in *Remote Sensing of Environment* in June, underscores the importance of studying polar climates for better monsoon predictions.

➡ **About the study**:

　o **Research Methodology:** Researchers used observational data (1980-2020) and climate models (CMIP5 and CMIP6) to analyse the effects of Arctic sea ice on atmospheric circulations influencing the ISMR.

　o **Finding**: Recent studies suggest that the **decline in Arctic sea ice, due to climate change,** impacts the Indian monsoon's behaviour.

　　• This connection could help improve the accuracy of long-term monsoon forecasts, crucial for India's agriculture and economy.

　o **Impact on Western and Peninsular India:** Less sea ice in the central Arctic leads to reduced rainfall in western and peninsular India, while central and northern India experience more rain.

　o **Atmospheric Circulations:** Increased sea ice in the Central Arctic strengthens cyclonic circulation in the North Atlantic, boosting **Rossby waves**, which affect weather patterns across India.

　　• **Effect on Jet Streams**: Rossby waves strengthen the Asian jet stream over the Caspian Sea, shifting the subtropical easterly jet northward, leading to more rainfall over western and peninsular India.

　o **Delayed Monsoon Onset:** Lower sea ice in the Barents-Kara Sea region causes a delay in the monsoon's onset and makes it more unpredictable.

　　• **Positive Arctic Oscillation**: Low sea ice in the Barents-Kara Sea region triggers a high-pressure system over southwest China, linked with a positive Arctic Oscillation, weakening the circum-global teleconnection (CGT).

　　• **Rainfall Distribution**: High surface temperatures in the Arabian Sea and reduced sea ice in the Barents-Kara Sea lead to increased rainfall over northeastern India, while central and northwest regions receive less rainfall.

➡ **Role of Climate Change:** Climate change is accelerating the reduction of Arctic sea ice, which increases the variability and unpredictability of the Indian summer monsoon.

　o **Impact on Rainfall Patterns:** Lower Arctic sea ice can lead to more frequent droughts in some regions of India, while causing excessive rainfall and flooding in others.

　o **Need for Better Forecasting:** The study emphasises the urgent need for expanded climate research to improve the accuracy of monsoon predictions, crucial for India's agriculture and economy

Indian Summer Monsoon Rainfall (ISMR)

☼ **Prominence of ISMR:** The ISMR, occurring from **July to September**, is one of the most prominent monsoon systems in the world, with the heaviest rains recorded in July and August.

☼ **Formation Mechanism:**

o In summer, the Central Asian and Indian landmass heats up faster than surrounding oceans, creating a **low-pressure band** at the Tropic of Cancer called the **intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ)**.

o **Trade winds from the southeast** are deflected toward the Indian landmass due to the **Coriolis force and the low pressure** as they cross the equator. They pick up moisture from the Arabian Sea, bringing rain to India.

o The southwest monsoon splits into the **Arabian Sea arm**, which brings rain to India's west coast, and the **Bay of Bengal arm**, which brings rain to eastern and northeastern India.

o These **two monsoon arms converge** over Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, with the Arabian Sea arm moving inward and the Bay of Bengal arm travelling along the Himalayas.

☼ **Influence of Oceans and Teleconnections:** Surface temperatures in the Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans affect the ISMR, while the circum-global teleconnection (CGT), also significantly influences the monsoon system. **Circum-Global Teleconnection (CGT)** is a large-scale atmospheric pattern that connects weather and climate systems across different regions of the world, primarily in the Northern Hemisphere. It is characterised by a series of alternating high- and low-pressure systems that form a wave-like pattern, stretching across continents. This pattern influences temperature, precipitation, and weather variability across various regions, including Europe, Asia, and North America.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the interplay between Arctic sea ice changes and the Indian monsoon underscores the complex dynamics of climate systems and the urgent need for comprehensive research. Initiatives like *Mission Mausam* are crucial in mitigating the impacts of climate change on agriculture and society. As we face increasing climate variability, collaborative efforts in scientific research and technology will be essential for developing effective strategies against climate-related challenges.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Examine the impact of Arctic sea ice decline on the Indian Summer Monsoon and its implications for India's agriculture. How can initiatives like *Mission Mausam* help improve weather forecasting and management to address these challenges? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

ACT EAST POLICY

Syllabus: GS II - Effect of Policies & Politics of Developed and Developing countries on India

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South- East Asia in this context* **(2017)**

Q) *'The time has come for India and Japan to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving global and strategic partnership that will have a great significance for Asia and the world as a whole.' Comment.* **(2019)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** A regional intergovernmental organisation founded in 1967, comprising 10 member states: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Its primary objective is to promote political, economic, and cultural cooperation, as well as regional stability and integration among its members.

➤ **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** :It is a 15 member comprehensive free trade agreement being negotiated between the 10 ASEAN Member States and ASEAN's free trade agreement (FTA) partners viz. Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. India withdrew from RCEP negotiations in 2019.

INTRODUCTION

India's Act East Policy, **launched in 2014**, marked a significant shift from the earlier Look East Policy, reflecting a more **proactive approach towards strengthening ties with Southeast and East Asia**. Aimed at enhancing economic, strategic, and cultural relations, the policy emphasises deepening India's engagement with ASEAN and the broader Asia-Pacific region. As a cornerstone of India's foreign policy, it seeks to **boost regional connectivity and cooperation** amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics.

WHY IN NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **recent visits to Brunei and Singapore highlight India's renewed focus on its "Act East" policy**. His visit to Brunei, the first by any Indian Prime Minister, aimed at strengthening defence and space cooperation, while addressing declining trade. In Singapore, discussions focused on boosting semiconductor collaboration to reduce risks from global tensions and attract more investment.

OVERVIEW OF ACT EAST POLICY

➡ **Origin**: The Act East Policy is a continuation of the Look East Policy, launched in 1992 by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, aimed at strengthening ties with Southeast Asia.

➡ **Shift in Focus:** In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi transitioned it to the Act East Policy, emphasising active engagement with East Asia, ASEAN nations, and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

➡ **Objectives**: Act East Policy aims to foster stronger ties with countries in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and strategic partnerships.

  o **Economic Cooperation and Strategic Partnerships**: Strengthening economic collaboration and strategic relationships with Asia-Pacific countries through engagement at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels.

o **Enhanced Connectivity with the Northeast**: Enhancing connectivity between the North Eastern states of India, including Arunachal Pradesh, and neighbouring countries in the region.

o **Focus on the Northeast**: Prioritising the development of the North East region in India's Act East Policy by creating an interface between the region and ASEAN countries.

o **Infrastructure and Connectivity Development**: Implementing projects to boost connectivity, including the Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, and the Rhi-Tiddim Road Project, as well as establishing Border Haats and enhancing infrastructure (roads, airports, telecommunications, power, etc.).

o **People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges**: Promoting cultural ties and fostering people-to-people contacts to strengthen relationships with ASEAN nations and beyond.

COMPARISON

Aspect	Look East Policy	Act East Policy
Launch Period	1991, during India's economic liberalisation	2014, during a period of stronger economic growth
Economic Focus	Primarily focused on trade and investment	Broader focus on economic cooperation, defence, and North East India development
Geopolitical Reach	Limited to Southeast Asian countries (ASEAN)	Expanded to include East Asian countries (Japan, South Korea) and strategic partnerships (QUAD)
Defence Cooperation	Minimal focus on defence	Strong emphasis on defence and security cooperation, including strategic dialogue with key partners
North East India	Recognized but minimal efforts	North East seen as a gateway to Southeast Asia; major focus on its development
Cultural Diplomacy	Limited to economic cooperation	Strong emphasis on cultural, religious, and linguistic exchanges (soft power diplomacy)
China Strategy	Limited engagement on regional security issues	Active countering of China's influence through partnerships in South China Sea and Indian Ocean
Investment	Primarily trade-centric	Attracted major investments from Japan and South Korea in sectors like infrastructure, technology, and manufacturing
Key Partners	Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN)	Expanded to include Japan, South Korea, Australia, USA (QUAD), and Southeast Asian countries

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ACT EAST POLICY (AEP)

✳ **High-Level Engagement with ASEAN**: India's leadership has focused on strengthening ties with ASEAN countries through regular high-level visits, reinvigorating bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

　ο　Projects like the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway have gained momentum**, showcasing renewed diplomatic efforts.

✳ **Enhanced Connectivity Initiatives**: Connectivity between India and ASEAN has been prioritised, with India allocating **$1 billion in 2015** for initiatives focused on commerce, culture, and regional connectivity.

✳ **Broadening Security and Defence Ties**: India has expanded its strategic partnerships with ASEAN, focusing on security, defence, and counter-terrorism collaborations.

　ο　Notable progress has been made in **defence relations with countries like Singapore and Vietnam**, alongside efforts to counter the influence of extremist groups like ISIS.

✳ **Expansion of Geographical Focus**: The AEP has broadened its scope beyond Southeast Asia to **include East Asian nations like Japan, South Korea, and Australia, as well as Pacific Island countries**.

　ο　India's relationship with Japan, particularly through the 2015 civilian nuclear deal, has been a major highlight.

✳ **Reinvigorated Relations with Key Countries**: Prime Minister's visit has revitalised ties with Australia, Fiji, and Mongolia, countries that had seen limited engagement in the past.

✳ **Firm Stand on the South China Sea**: India has maintained a strong position on freedom of navigation and peaceful dispute resolution in the South China Sea.

　ο　This stance is critical for India's trade, with over 40% passing through this region, and its interests in the area's natural resources.

- ☀ **Strengthened India-U.S. Strategic Vision**: India's Act East Policy aligns with the U.S.'s "pivot to Asia" strategy, increasing India's geopolitical influence and balancing relations with China.

    o The growing India-U.S. partnership was underscored during President Obama's 2015 visit to India.

CHALLENGES OF THE ACT EAST POLICY (AEP)

- 🔴 **Rising China-India Tensions:** China's increasing influence and assertiveness in Southeast Asia have made it difficult for India to maintain its position in the region.

- 🔴 **India's Economic Underperformance**: Disappointment with India's economic growth and its decision to opt out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have dampened interest from regional business communities.

- 🔴 **Sectarian Concerns**: India's domestic approach to minority communities, particularly Muslims and Christians, has raised concerns among Southeast Asian civil societies, especially in countries with large Islamic populations**.**

- 🔴 **Diminished Soft Power:** The rise of Hindu majoritarianism in India has weakened its soft power appeal, particularly in culturally diverse and religiously pluralistic Southeast Asian countries.

- 🔴 **Weakening B2B and P2P Ties:** Despite ongoing government-to-government (G2G) efforts, business-to-business (B2B) and people-to-people (P2P) ties between India and Southeast Asia have declined, reducing deeper regional engagement.

- 🔴 **Pro-China Sentiment Amid Pandemic**: China's successful management of the Covid-19 pandemic has generated favourable views among Southeast Asia's ethnic Chinese communities, further challenging India's regional influence.

- 🔴 **ASEAN's Growing Dependence on China**: Many ASEAN countries have become increasingly reliant on China's economic and political soft power, leaving limited space for India to exert influence in the region.

WAY FORWARD

- ✳ **Strengthen Economic Engagement**: India must bolster its economic presence in Southeast Asia by **enhancing trade and investment in key sectors like infrastructure, energy, and technology**, to regain regional confidence in its economic strength.

- ✳ **Build Strategic Confidence**: India should demonstrate reliability in regional security matters, such as **maritime security and defence cooperation**, while also contributing to **humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)** efforts.

- ✳ **Maintain Strategic Autonomy**: India needs to balance its diplomatic ties between the US and China, preserving its strategic autonomy without explicitly aligning with either power, to maintain regional credibility.

- ✳ **Increase Political and Security Cooperation**: Deepening political and security partnerships with Southeast Asian countries is crucial, particularly on issues like the **South China Sea dispute, Taiwan tensions, and the Myanmar crisis.**

- ✳ **Leverage Cultural and Historical Ties**: India should strengthen its soft power by leveraging its historical and cultural links with Southeast Asia, fostering people-to-people connections and promoting cultural diplomacy.

- ✳ **Adapt to Changing Regional Dynamics**: India must remain agile and responsive to the evolving political and economic landscape in Southeast Asia, ensuring its policies align with the region's shifting security and economic priorities.

- ✳ **Rebuild Global Leadership Perception**: India should take a more assertive role in promoting a rules-based international order and actively engage in multilateral forums like ASEAN, solidifying its influence in regional decision-making frameworks.

CONCLUSION

The Look East and Act East Policies have strengthened India's global standing, achieving successes in various geopolitical areas. However, challenges remain, requiring Indian diplomacy to reassess these strategies for better alignment with domestic and international goals. While the Act East Policy is more impactful, it builds on the foundation laid by the Look East Policy, making both complementary.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Critically evaluate the evolution of India's "Look East" policy into the "Act East" policy. How has this shift impacted India's geopolitical, economic, and strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

AVIATION INDUSTRY IN INDIA

Syllabus: GS III - Infrastructure

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Examine the developments of Airports in India through Joint Ventures under Public- Private Partnership(PPP) model. What are the challenges faced by the authorities in this regard?* **(2017)**

INTRODUCTION

The 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation concluded on September 12, 2024, with the adoption of the landmark **Delhi Declaration,** aimed at making air travel safe, affordable, and accessible to all, as emphasised by Prime Minister who stated, "Our aim is to bring air travel to the common people."

WHY IN NEWS

Recently, the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation concluded, with the formal adoption of the landmark Delhi Declaration.

SHORT TAKES

➢ **UDAN Scheme (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik)**

o It is a regional airport development and Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) of the Union Government of India which aims to provide connectivity to un-served and under-served airports of the country through the revival of existing airstrips and airports.

o Launched in 2017

o **UDAN Scheme 1.0:**

» Initiated with 5 airlines, UDAN 1.0 awarded 128 flight routes to 70 airports, including 36 newly operational airports.

o **UDAN Scheme 2.0:**

» In 2018, 73 underserved and unserved airports were announced, marking the inclusion of helipads for the first time under UDAN.

o **UDAN Scheme 3.0:**

» Introduced Tourism Routes in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism.

» Included Seaplanes for connecting Water Aerodromes.

» Expanded UDAN to cover numerous routes in the **North-East Region.**

o **UDAN Scheme 4.0:**

» Launched in December 2019, UDAN 4.0 focused on the North-Eastern Regions, Hilly States, and Islands.

» Prioritised airports developed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for Viability Gap Funding (VGF).
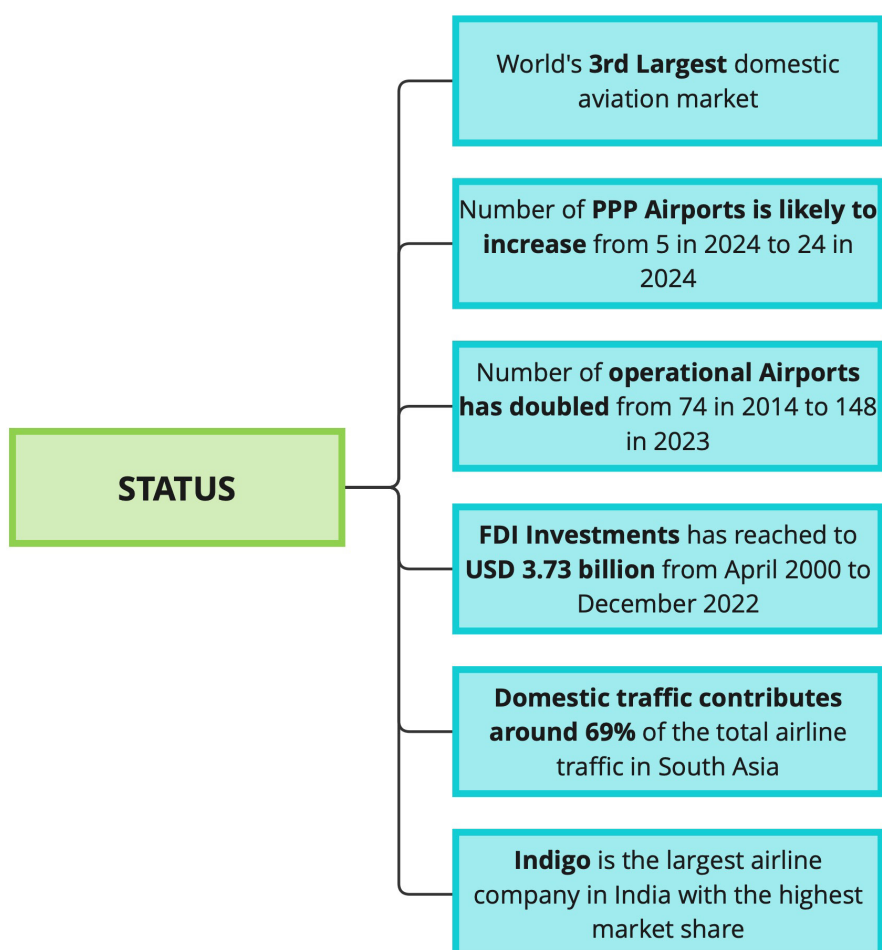
» Incorporated operations of helicopters and seaplanes.

o **UDAN Scheme 5.0:**

» Launched in 2022

» Focus on Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats) aircraft.

» Removal of the 600 km cap on stage length, allowing flights on any distance.

» Increased Viability Gap Funding (VGF) cap to 600 km for both Priority and Non-Priority areas (from the previous 500 km).

Delhi Declaration

☼ The Declaration was adopted unanimously after the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference in New Delhi.

☼ The Declaration is a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing regional cooperation, addressing emerging challenges and fostering sustainable growth in the civil aviation sector in the Asia-Pacific region.

☼ The Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference also celebrates 80 years of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

☼ **Key Announcements:**

» The Prime Minister emphasised India's advancements in aviation, highlighting that 15% of Indian pilots are women, well above the global average.

» Proposal for an International Buddhist Circuit to enhance regional tourism and connectivity.

» India aims to establish 350-400 airports by 2047, expanding its global aviation footprint.

» The establishment of a Pacific Small Island Developing States Liaison Office to assist smaller nations in managing aviation challenges.

» Initiatives like the 'Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam' campaign to plant 80,000 saplings in commemoration of ICAO's 80 years. Focus on green aviation and sustainability in future plans.

STATUS OF AVIATION INDUSTRY

STATUS

- World's **3rd Largest** domestic aviation market
- Number of **PPP Airports is likely to increase** from 5 in 2024 to 24 in 2024
- Number of **operational Airports has doubled** from 74 in 2014 to 148 in 2023
- **FDI Investments** has reached to **USD 3.73 billion** from April 2000 to December 2022
- **Domestic traffic contributes around 69%** of the total airline traffic in South Asia
- **Indigo** is the largest airline company in India with the highest market share

POTENTIAL OF THE SECTOR

★ **Increase in traffic:**

o As per data from the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation**, the domestic traffic for India has increased by over 125% since 2014 to 152 million passengers in 2023.

o Similarly, international passengers at Indian airports have risen by nearly 49% since 2013-14 to 6.1 million passengers in 2023-24, from 4.1 million passengers in 2013-14, data from Airports Authority of India.

★ **Robust Demand:**

o Rising working groups and widening middle-class demography is expected to boost demand.

o Country will become the third-largest aviation market in terms of passengers by 2024.

o India will require over **2200 aircraft by 2042.**

★ **Increase in regional connectivity:**

o The **UDAN scheme** has made air travel accessible to small cities and India's lower middle class, with 14 million people benefiting from the initiative so far.

★ **Opportunities in Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO):**

o By 2028, the MRO industry is likely to grow over US$ 2.4 billion from US$ 800 million in 2018.

o Revenues of domestic MRO services providers in India are expected to triple by FY28, driven by a doubling aircraft fleet, government support, and ongoing MRO capex at airports, according to Crisil.

★ **Policy Support:**

o As per the present FDI Policy, 100% FDI is permitted in scheduled Air Transport Service/ Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline (Automatic upto 49% and Government route beyond 49%).

★ **Increasing Investments:**

o The sector is expected to witness investments worth **US$ 25 billion by 2027.**

o The Ministry of Civil Aviation is developing public-private partnership (PPP) modalities for the privatisation of 25 airports under the **National Monetization Pipeline.**

CHALLENGES FACING INDIA'S AVIATION SECTOR

▼ **High Aviation Fuel Taxes**

o Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) is heavily taxed in India, contributing to 40-45% of airline operating costs, compared to 20-30% globally.

▼ **Financing and Cape Town Convention**

o India has not ratified the Cape Town Convention, which provides protections to creditors in the case of airline insolvency.

o This increases the risk for lessors and creditors, leading to higher leasing rates and making financing less attractive for Indian airlines.

▼ **Underdeveloped Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO) Capabilities**

o India's MRO sector is underdeveloped, with 80% of maintenance work, especially for components and engines, outsourced abroad.

o Outsourcing MRO services increases operational costs and limits the growth of local expertise and job creation in the sector.

▼ **Complex Regulatory Environment**

o MRO services in India face regulatory hurdles, including high customs duties on components

and restrictive GST policies.

o These challenges make Indian MROs less competitive globally, hindering the sector's expansion and ability to attract foreign business.

▼ **Other challenges like cutting edge competition:**

o **Dominance of Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs):**

• The Indian aviation market's intense competition among numerous low-cost carriers, **focused on capturing market share through reduced fares**, drives down ticket prices, squeezes profit margins, and forces airlines to cut costs, often **impacting service quality and operational efficiency.**

o **Cost-sensitive customer base:**

• The cost-sensitive nature of Indian travellers, who often choose flights based on the lowest price rather than brand loyalty or service quality, compels airlines to maintain low fares, limiting their ability to invest in improved services, newer aircraft, and enhanced safety measures.

o **High debts:**

- Indian airlines, particularly full-service carriers like Air India and Vistara, have accumulated high levels of debt.

- In FY 2024, **Go First filed for bankruptcy**, primarily due to financial distress from mounting debts and engine supply issues.

  » High debt limits airlines' resilience against market shocks, like fluctuating fuel prices or economic downturns.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Tax Reforms for Aviation Fuel**

o **Bring ATF under GST**: Introducing ATF under the GST regime at an optimal rate can significantly reduce operational costs for airlines.

o **Short-Term Measures**: Central and state governments should consider reducing excise duty and VAT on ATF to provide immediate relief and encourage sector growth.

✳ **Policy Action**:

o **Ratification of the Cape Town Convention**:

- The government should expedite the ratification of the Cape Town Convention to improve the leasing environment by protecting creditors and reducing financing costs for airlines.

✳ **Enhancing Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO) Capabilities:**

o **Incentives and Tax Relief**: Implement 0% customs duty on MRO components, streamline customs processing, and ensure GST exemptions on MRO services for foreign aircraft.

o **Promote Local Manufacturing**: Develop Production-Linked Incentives (PLIs) for MRO components and spares, and prioritise sector lending to attract investment and boost local MRO capabilities.

✳ **Infrastructure Development and Policy Reforms**

o **Encourage Private Investment**: Foster private sector involvement in developing MRO facilities and airport infrastructure.

o **Civil-Defense Convergence**: Establish policies that facilitate the convergence of civil and defence MRO sectors to optimise available resources and enhance efficiency.

✳ **Streamlining Regulatory Processes**

o **International Standards Recognition**: Align with global regulatory standards such as **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)- US** and **European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)** through bilateral agreements to simplify compliance and expand market access.

CONCLUSION

India's aviation sector is poised for significant growth, driven by rising demand, government support, and economic factors. However, to fully realise this potential, the industry must address key challenges and strategic investments and policy reforms will be essential to ensure that the sector continues to thrive, delivering broad benefits to the nation's economy and its people.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) What impact will the adoption of the landmark Delhi Declaration at the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation have on the Indian aviation industry? Also discuss the challenges faced by the Indian aviation sector in achieving these goals **(15 marks)(250 words)**

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is necessary for bringing unbanked to the institutional finance fold. Do you agree with this for financial inclusion of the poorer section of the Indian society? Give arguments to justify your opinion.* **(2016)**

Q) *"Economic growth in the recent past has been led by an increase in labour productivity." Explain this statement. Suggest the growth pattern that will lead to creation of more jobs without compromising labour productivity.* **(2022)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ **PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme:**

o Launched in 2019

o To provide financial support to small and marginal farmers to supplement their income and support their agricultural needs.

o Eligible farmer families receive ₹6,000 per year in three equal instalments of ₹2,000 each. The amount is directly transferred to the beneficiaries' bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

IMPORTANCE

INTRODUCTION

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a social welfare concept where beneficiaries receive a guaranteed income regularly through unconditional transfer payments. The primary goals of UBI are to reduce poverty and streamline social welfare by replacing other need-based programs that often involve extensive bureaucracy.

WHY IN NEWS

The increase in jobless growth due to automation and AI has heightened inequality, sparking debates on introducing Universal Basic Income (UBI) in several countries including India.

IMPORTANCE

Poverty Alleviation:

o UBI can provide a safety net for millions living below the poverty line.

o For instance, the **2016–17 Economic Survey** proposed a **UBI of Rs.7,620 per annum**, which could significantly lift a large portion of the population above the poverty threshold.

Rise in Unemployment:

o The **ILO reports** that **83% of the unemployed population in India** are youth, due to the rapidly changing economy influenced by automation and AI.

Reducing Income Inequality:

o UBI can bridge the income gap, especially in rural areas, by providing direct cash transfers that boost the purchasing power of those in need.

Simplification of Welfare Schemes:

o India has numerous welfare schemes, often

plagued by inefficiencies and leakages.

o UBI could simplify these by consolidating various subsidies into a direct cash transfer system, reducing administrative costs and corruption.

Support for Farmers and Rural Communities:

o In regions suffering from agrarian distress, UBI can provide much-needed financial relief.

o For example, Telangana's **Rythu Bandhu scheme**, which provides direct income support to farmers, mirrors the UBI concept and has been praised for its positive impact.

Empowerment of Women and Vulnerable Groups:

o Direct income transfers under UBI can empower women and marginalised communities by giving them control over financial resources, promoting gender equality, and reducing dependence on patriarchal structures.

Adapting to Technological Disruptions:

o With the rise of automation and AI, many traditional jobs are at risk. UBI can act as a buffer, supporting those displaced by technological changes and giving them the financial security to upskill or transition to new job roles.

➡ **Health Stimulus:**

o Improves physical and mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression associated with poverty and financial insecurity. It can also enable people to access better health care, sanitation, and nutrition.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST UBI

🔴 **High Fiscal Cost**:

o The 2016-17 Economic Survey of India estimated that a modest UBI of ₹7,620 per year for 75% of the population would cost about 4.9% of GDP, posing a significant fiscal burden for a resource-constrained developing country.

o **Implication**: Financing UBI would likely require cuts in existing welfare schemes, increased taxes, or higher public debt, all of which could negatively impact economic stability and growth.

🔴 **Risk of Inflation**:

o Studies suggest that direct cash transfers, if not backed by corresponding supply-side measures, can lead to inflation, particularly in rural and less-developed areas where supply chains are weak.

o **Implication**: This inflation could **erode the purchasing power of the income** provided, rendering UBI less effective in improving real living standards.

🔴 **Unproductive Spending and Dependency:**

o Recipients might spend the unconditional income on non-essential or harmful items such as alcohol, gambling, or luxury goods, rather than on essential needs like food, education, or healthcare.

o Also regular cash transfers could lead to a

dependency mindset, reducing the motivation to seek employment or develop skills, particularly among youth and low-income groups.

🔴 **Potential Reduction in Labour Participation**:

o A 2018 study by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** noted that UBI could disincentivize labour, particularly among lower-income workers who might opt out of the workforce if basic needs are met without employment.

o **Implication**: Reduced labour participation could **slow economic growth and reduce the workforce** in critical sectors.

🔴 **Targeting and Effectiveness Issues**:

o According to a **NITI Aayog report**, UBI's universal nature may not effectively target the most needy, as it provides the same amount to both the poor and relatively better-off citizens, leading to inefficient resource allocation.

🔴 **Strain on Existing Social Programs**:

o India spends about a significant percentage of its GDP on existing welfare schemes, including food subsidies, education, and healthcare.

o Replacing these with UBI could lead to a reduction in essential services for the poor, which cash alone may not adequately substitute.

ALTERNATIVES FOR UBI

☀ **Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT)**

o Offer cash payments to households contingent on meeting specific requirements, such as school attendance or health check-ups.

o Encourages behaviours that promote long-term development, such as education and health, while providing immediate financial support.

☀ **Minimum Wage Policies**

o Increase the legal minimum wage to ensure that all workers earn a livable income.

o Directly raises incomes for low-wage workers and helps reduce poverty without the need for cash transfers.

☀ **Quasi UBI (QUBRI)**

o It is a variant of UBI defined as a universal, unconditional cash transfer. Proposed by a former Chief Economic Adviser, it suggests providing Rs 18,000 per year to each rural household in India, excluding those that are "demonstrably well-off," as a measure to address agrarian distress.

☀ **Employment Guarantee Schemes**

o Programs that guarantee a certain number of days of employment to eligible households, such as MGNREGA in India.

o Provides income security through guaranteed work and contributes to local development while empowering rural workers.

☀ **Universal Basic Services**

o Focus on providing essential services like healthcare, education, and housing to all citizens, rather than cash.

o Ensures everyone has access to basic needs, potentially improving overall quality of life and reducing inequality.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Pilot Programs and Gradual Implementation**:

o Start with targeted pilot programs in select regions to study the impacts on poverty, labour participation, and local economies. Learning from these pilots will provide valuable data for scaling up.

✳ **Targeted UBI**:

o Instead of a universal approach, initially target the most vulnerable sections of society, such as low-income families, the elderly, and the unemployed. This would help manage costs and ensure that the benefits reach those who need them most.

o Similar to the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)**, which provides income support to farmers, UBI could focus on vulnerable groups before expanding to the wider population..

✳ **Strengthening Financial Infrastructure**:

o Ensure that every citizen has access to banking services, digital literacy, and financial inclusion. Expanding the reach of the **JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile)** trinity will be critical in facilitating seamless cash transfers.

✳ **Addressing Inflation Concerns**:

o Complement UBI with measures to boost local production and supply chains, especially in essential goods, to prevent inflationary pressures from undermining the program's benefits.

o Investments in agricultural productivity and local markets can help ensure that cash transfers do not simply drive up prices but also stimulate local economic growth.

GLOBAL EXAMPLES

Alaska's Universal Basic Income, known as the **Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD)**, is a unique program that distributes annual payments to all eligible residents. Funded by the state's oil revenues, the PFD aims to share Alaska's natural resource wealth directly with its citizens.

♣ Established in 1976, the Alaska Permanent Fund invests oil royalties, and since 1982, dividends from the fund's earnings have been distributed to residents.

♣ The dividend varies yearly based on the fund's performance and has ranged from around $1,000 to over $2,000 per person in recent years.

♣ The PFD provides a financial boost to households, supporting local economies and helping reduce poverty, especially in rural areas where costs are high.

♣ Studies have shown that the PFD has helped stimulate spending in local businesses without significant disincentives to work, demonstrating how a UBI model can work in practice.

Universal Basic Income: Expert Views

- 🔍 **Abhijit Banerjee**, the Nobel laureate, in his book "**Good Economics for Hard Times**", has mentioned Universal basic income and called it **ultra universal basic (UUBI) income** because any universal income that governments of poor countries can afford will be ultra basic.

  » He further suggested that the best combination would be a UUBI which everyone can access when they need it, and larger transfers targeted to the very poor and linked to preventive care and children's education.

- 🔍 **Amartya Sen** saw basic income as a perfect excuse for the Government of India to abdicate their responsibility and said that it may lead to more privatisation in India as people will spend more toward private services including education and healthcare.

CONCLUSION

Universal Basic Income (UBI) represents a transformative approach to social welfare by providing unconditional cash support to all individuals, thereby reducing poverty and income inequality. Despite challenges, UBI can simplify the welfare system, reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, and ensure aid reaches those in need. With proper design, social services, and effective implementation, UBI can enhance economic security and promote a more equitable society.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Examine the feasibility of implementing Universal Basic Income (UBI) in a country with a large informal economy like India, and compare it with other alternative approaches. **(10 marks)(150 words)**

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MENTAL WELLNESS

> *Syllabus: GS I - Indian Society*

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Explain why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society* ***(2023)***

SHORT TAKES

➤ **National Crime Records Bureau(NCRB):** Established in 1986 under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) by merging the Inter-State Criminals Data Branch, Directorate of Coordination and Police Computer (DCPC), and Central Finger Print Bureau of CBI and responsible for collecting and analysing crime data.

➤ **Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY):** A measure used to assess the overall burden of disease, expressed as the total number of years lost due to ill-health, disability, or premature death. It combines the years of life lost (YLL) from early mortality and the years lived with disability (YLD), providing a comprehensive view of the impact of health conditions on a population.

INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO, mental health is a state of well-being that allows individuals to cope with life's challenges, realise their potential, and contribute meaningfully to society. It plays a vital role in shaping personal, community, and socio-economic development, emphasising its importance as a basic human right. Ensuring mental health is essential for fostering decision-making, building relationships, and improving overall quality of life.

WHY IN NEWS

A recent editorial in The Hindu highlighted the tragic suicides of a 21-year-old and a 23-year-old student at IIT Guwahati, underscoring India's escalating mental health crisis. A new Lancet Public Health study titled "A Public Health Approach to Suicide Prevention" emphasizes the need for policymakers to focus on societal factors that contribute to these incidents.

INDIAN SCENARIO MENTAL HEALTH

➡ **Increasing Prevalence:** Mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders are rising in India, as noted in a 2023 Cureus Journal study.

➡ **Statistics on Mental Wellness:**

o Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 100,000 population in India stand at 2,443.

- Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) is a measure of disease burden that combines years of life lost (YLL) due to premature death and years lived with disability (YLD), providing a comprehensive view of the impact of health conditions on a population.

o The age-adjusted suicide rate is 21.1 per 100,000 people.

- Age-adjusted suicide rate accounts for the age distribution in the population, allowing for better comparisons across populations with different age structures.

o The suicide rate per 100,000 population is 10.9.

➡ **Treatment Gap:** The treatment gap for mental disorders in India ranges between 70-92%, indicating a significant number of people lack access to proper care.

➡ **Economic Impact:** The economic loss due to mental health issues from 2012 to 2030 is estimated at USD 1.03 trillion.

➡ **Regional Variations:** Mental health morbidity is higher in urban metro regions (13.5%) compared to rural areas (6.9%) and urban non-metro areas (4.3%).

➡ **Gender Variations:** According to the "Emotional Wellness State of Employees" report, 72.2% of female employees experience high-stress levels, compared to 53.64% of male employees.

➡ **Age Variations:** Employees aged 21-30 experience the highest stress levels, with 64.42% reporting high stress, followed by 59.81% of employees aged 31-40.

ISSUES FACED IN MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA

- **Social Stigma:** Mental health stigma deters individuals from seeking help, resulting in social isolation and worsening of conditions.

- **Lack of Awareness:** There is limited mental health education, causing a lack of understanding about mental illnesses and their treatment.

- **Inadequate Mental Health Workforce:** India has only 0.3 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, far below global standards, leading to poor access to care.

- **Shortage of Infrastructural Facilities:** The country has a severe shortage of psychiatric hospitals, outpatient clinics, and community-based mental health services, especially in rural areas.
  - o India has only 0.004 mental hospitals per 100,000 people, compared to the global average of 0.04.

- **Limited Budget Allocation:** Only 0.16% of the national healthcare budget is allocated to mental health, resulting in inadequate funding for services, infrastructure, and training.

- **Low Access in Rural Areas:** Mental health services are concentrated in urban centres, leaving rural populations without adequate care or mental health support.

- **Economic Barriers:** The high cost of mental healthcare and limited insurance coverage pose significant barriers to treatment access.

- **Lack of Integration into Primary Healthcare:** Mental health services are not well-integrated into India's primary healthcare system, leading to fragmented care and poor accessibility.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

- **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP):**
  - o A government initiative in India that aims to improve mental health care access and affordability.
  - o The program was launched in 1982 to address the shortage of qualified mental health professionals and the heavy burden of mental illness in the country.

- **Mental health care act, 2017:**
  - o A law in India that aims to protect the rights of people with mental illness and ensure that they receive quality, affordable, and accessible mental healthcare services.

- **Mental Health Review Board:**
  - o The Mental Health Review Board, established under the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, safeguards the rights of individuals with mental illness and ensures ethical treatment in mental health facilities.

- **Tele-Manas:**
  - o A tele-mental health helpline launched by the Government of India in 2022 and till date the platform has provided counselling to more than 9,05,225 through 51 tele Manas Cells.

- **Manodarpan Project:**
  - o A Ministry of education initiative designed to offer kids, families, and teachers psychosocial support for their mental health and well-being amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram:**
  - o A program launched by the Government of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2014 to address the health needs of adolescents in India including mental health.

- **Kiran Helpline:**
  - o Launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment as a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns

- **Yuva Spandana Yojana (Karnataka):**
  - o A program in Karnataka, India that aims to support the mental health of young people, and to help them transition from childhood to adulthood.

GLOBAL EXAMPLES

☀ **WHO Comprehensive mental health action plan (2013–2030):**

o It is a plan to promote mental health and well-being for all.

o The plan was adopted in 2013, extended to 2030 in 2019, and updated in 2021.

o The plan's objectives include Universal health coverage, Community-based care, Research, Suicide prevention etc.

☀ **WHO guidelines on mental health at work:**

o WHO released its first-ever global guidelines on mental health at work on September 28, 2022.

o The guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations to: Promote mental health, Prevent mental health conditions, and Enable people with mental health conditions to participate in the workplace.

☀ **United Kingdom - NHS Talking Therapies programme**

o Formerly known as **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)**, it was introduced to **improve access to evidence-based psychological treatments** for anxiety and depression, with nearly 1.2 million people accessing these services in 2021/22.

o The NHS aims to expand this further, targeting 1.9 million people annually by 2023/24 through increased training and deployment of psychological therapists.

☀ **Finnish Education System**

o Emphasises **flexibility and autonomy,** allowing students to explore subjects based on their interests and enabling teachers to adapt their methods to individual needs.

o This student-centred approach **fosters a sense of ownership in learning, positively impacting self-esteem and mental health**.

WAY FORWARD

✷ **Education Level:**

o Increase seats in psychiatry and introduce more undergraduate and super-specialization courses.

o Boost the budget for mental healthcare education and training programs.

✷ **Technological Level:**

o Implement psychometric analysis at key life stages (school, college, workplace) to detect mental health issues early.

o Leverage AI-enabled mental health apps to complement mainstream treatment methods.

✷ **Infrastructure:**

o Increase the number of psychiatric nurses, psychologists, and mental health professionals to meet growing demands.

✷ **Economic:**

o Significantly raise the national healthcare budget for mental health from 0.16% to adequately fund infrastructure, training, and service delivery.

✷ **Policy Level:**

o Prioritise mental health in the National Health Agenda and empower mental health professionals.

o Strengthen community-based mental health services, enhance literacy, and invest in comprehensive mental health programs.

✷ **Work Culture:**

o Support the 21-30 age demographic affected by remote and hybrid work models by prioritising regular communication and engagement in organisations

CONCLUSION

While the Indian government has taken commendable steps to address mental health issues through various initiatives, the growing prevalence of mental health conditions demands even more robust action. Increased funding, expanded access to care, and heightened public awareness campaigns are essential to effectively combat the ongoing crisis. Comprehensive strategies that prioritise mental well-being across all sectors will be crucial for fostering a healthier society.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Assess the current state of mental health in India and discuss the challenges and opportunities in addressing this public health crisis **(10 marks) (150 words)**

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are Head of District irrigation department and entrusted with responsibility to make and maintain canals in the district. District is drought prone and irrigation activities are very scanty. The reputation of the department is also dented by a recent scam in the irrigation department, whereby few engineers were caught red handed while taking bribes.

a.   Identify the ethical issues involved in the case.
b.   What steps would you take for the welfare of the district?
c.   Also give some suggestions by which reputation and prestige of the department can be restored?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Compassionate Governance:** Eighteen destitute individuals in Thiruvananthapuram received relief as Gandhi Bhavan in Kollam took over their care after their families refused to accept them post-recovery, with government support under the Vayoraksha project. They will receive medical treatment, vocational training, and support to help them reintegrate into society.

2. **Misgovernance**: The Kannada Development Authority's proposal to mandate medical prescriptions in Kannada has raised concerns about patient safety, with doctors and public health experts warning it could lead to medication errors. They argue that while promoting Kannada is important, it should not come at the cost of healthcare accessibility.

3. **Human Rights:** The U.N. investigator on the right to food accused Israel of carrying out a "starvation campaign" against Palestinians during the Gaza war, a claim Israel strongly denies, citing its continued facilitation of aid deliveries. He claimed that 80% of Palestinians in Gaza were experiencing famine or catastrophic hunger by December.

4. **Consumer Rights**: A Gujarat consumer court ordered Lufthansa to pay Maharshi Yadav Rs 1 lakh and refund his ticket cost of Rs 67,612 after he was denied boarding due to a lack of a Schengen visa for his stopovers in Germany. The court found the airline engaged in unfair trade practices by not informing him about the visa requirement.

5. **Environment Ethics:** A study by IPE Global and Esri India reveals that 85% of India's districts face extreme climate events, with 45% experiencing a shift from floods to droughts or vice versa. The research highlights a fourfold increase in the frequency, intensity, and unpredictability of these events over recent decades, with significant impacts expected on 1.47 billion people by 2036.

6. **Perseverance**: Navdeep Singh, who faced teasing and isolation due to his dwarfism, overcame these challenges through dedication to athletics, eventually winning gold in the men's javelin throw (F41) at the Paralympics. Initially awarded silver, he was upgraded to gold after the disqualification of the Iranian winner.

7. **Environment Ethics:** The standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) approved several controversial projects, including transmission lines in Goa's Mollem National Park and Gujarat's Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, while reprimanding the Madhya Pradesh tourism department for unauthorised construction in protected areas.

8. **Gender Rights:** In rural China, despite legal equality on paper, women who marry outside their village often face denial of land rights and compensation. These "married-out women" frequently encounter systemic discrimination due to male-dominated village assemblies and ambiguous laws, which undermine their legal rights and access to benefits.

9. **AI Ethics:** IISc researchers have created a new computing platform with molecular films that mimics brain functions, offering 16,500 conductance states and potentially revolutionising AI efficiency and flexibility for personal devices

MODEL ESSAY

"Sports can create hope where once there was only despair"

Introduction

- Quote by Nelson Mandela

- Meaning: Sports possess the unique ability to inspire hope and resilience in individuals and communities, even in the face of adversity.

- Brief overview of the transformative power of sports.

Importance of Sports

- **Physical and Mental Health:** Promote physical well-being and mental health benefits, such as stress reduction and improved self-esteem.

- **Community Building:** Foster a sense of belonging and unity within communities, strengthening social bonds.

- **Inspiration and Role Models:** Athletes can serve as powerful role models, inspiring individuals to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

- **Education and Life Skills**:Instils values such as teamwork, leadership, time management, and discipline, which benefit individuals

Challenges in Sports

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Many regions lack adequate sports facilities and equipment, limiting access to sports opportunities.

- **Discrimination and Inequality:** Discrimination based on factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status can hinder participation in sports.

- **Corruption and Match-Fixing:** Corruption and match-fixing can undermine the integrity of sports and erode public trust.

- **Pressure and Mental Health Issues:** The intense pressure to succeed in sports can lead to mental health challenges for athletes.

Schemes of the Indian Government

- **Khelo India Scheme**: Aims at promoting sports culture at the grassroots level by identifying and nurturing young talent.

- **Fit India Movement:** An initiative to encourage physical fitness and healthy lifestyles across all age groups.

- **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS):** Focuses on providing financial and logistical support to elite athletes to enhance their performance at global events, especially the Olympics.

The Global Role of Sports

- **Rebuilding Post-Conflict Societies**: Crucial role in post-conflict nations like South Africa- Nelson Mandela used rugby to unite a divided nation after apartheid.

- **Disaster Recovery:** To provide psychological support and communal bonding after natural disasters.

- **Social Change Movements:** Athletes have historically been at the forefront of social justice movements. Eg: Muhammad Ali, Colin Kaepernick, and Billie Jean King used their platforms to address issues such as racial inequality, war, and gender discrimination.

Conclusion

- Call for continued government support and investment in sports development.

- Highlight the importance of promoting sportsmanship, fair play, and inclusivity in the sporting world.

Sample Quotes

- *Sports don't build character; they reveal it - John Wooden*

- *Sports serve society by providing vivid examples of excellence- George F Will*

- *The moment you give up, is the moment you let someone else win- Kobe Bryant*

MAINS JOT DOWN

GS- II - *JUDICIARY*

➡ According to a report released by **India Child Protection**, **Fast Track Courts** are much more efficient in handling rape cases and those related to Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act

➡ FTSCs disposed of 83% of the cases in 2022 compared with 10% by the conventional courts.

➡ **Fast Track Courts**

  • Centrally sponsored scheme, launched in 2019 (extended up to 2026)

  • Centre bears its expenditure from the Nirbhaya Fund

  • Under the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.

  • Objective: Ensures swift disposal of rape cases and those coming under the POCSO Act.

GS- III - *ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION & DEGRADATION*

➡ The Union Cabinet approved the implementation of the **Prime Minister Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme**.

➡ The implementing agency for this scheme is the **Ministry of Heavy Industries, Government of India.**

  • This scheme has been approved with an outlay of ₹ 10, 900 crores.

  • It will be implemented over a period of two years, starting from 2024.

  • It has been approved with the aim of replacing the flagship Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II) programme.

    » It was in operation till March, 2024.

  • The approved PM E-DRIVE scheme will fix the loopholes and shortcomings of the past FAME schemes.

GS- I - *IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES*

➡ Eminent social reformer and rationalist **Periyar Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy** was commemorated on his 146th birth anniversary on September 17.

  • Born in Erode, Tamil Nadu, Periyar Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy is also known as the **'Father of the Dravidian movement.**

  • He rebelled against Brahminical dominance and gender and caste inequality in Tamil Nadu. Participated in **Vaikom Satyagraha (1924)** which demanded the right of lower castes to use a public path in front of Vaikom temple.

  • Opposed the conservatism of the Indian National Congress and resigned from it in 1925.

  • Associated with the **Justice party** (formed in 1916 to oppose the political and economic power of Brahmins).

  • Founded the Self **Respect Movement in 1925** to free people from slavery and irrationality.

GS- II - *HEALTH*

➡ The Union Cabinet approved health cover for senior citizens under **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM JAY).**

➡ **Scheme**:

  • All senior citizens aged 70 and above regardless of their income.

  • Senior citizens will receive a family-based cover of Rs. 5 lakh annually. Those already covered by AB PM-JAY will receive an additional top-up of Rs. 5 lakh annually, separate from their family's existing cover.

  • Eligible senior citizens will be issued a distinct card. Senior citizens already availing benefits of other public health insurance schemes may either choose their existing scheme or AB PM-JAY.

  • Senior citizens under private health insurance or Employees' State Insurance schemes are also eligible for AB PM-JAY benefits.

GS- III - *ECONOMY*

- The **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises** has inaugurated **CREATE** setup in Leh.
- It supports and boosts local productivity, enhances product quality, and unlocks economic potential, thereby improving the livelihoods of local communities.
- The initiative will drive rural industrialization and encourage enterprise creation, helping retain traditional artisans in challenging areas such as Ladakh.
- **CREATE will offer:**
  - Pashmina Wool RovingFacility,
  - Training to develop production facilities for essential oil extraction from roses and other flowers,
  - Training to establish production facilities for bioprocessing of locally available fruits and other raw materials.
- **The Ministry of Commerce and Industry** launched **Trade Connect ePlatform** setup to connect Indian Exporters, MSMEs and Entrepreneurs, Indian Missions Abroad, Export Promotion Councils and other Partner Government Agencies.
- It will aid in achieving $1 trillion merchandise and $1 trillion services export target by 2030.
- **Trade Connect e-Platform**
  - It is a single window initiative aimed at facilitating international trade by Indian exporters, especially MSMEs by providing real time access to trade-related information.
  - Developed in collaboration with the Ministry of MSME, EXIM Bank, Department of Financial Service, and Ministry of External Affairs.
- Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has suggested reciprocal arrangements with foreign governments for information sharing and enforcement measures to prevent tax evasion in OIDAR services.
- **Online Information and Database Access or Retrieval (OIDAR) Services:**
  - Services provided through the medium of internet and received by the recipient online without having any physical interface.
    » E.g., cloud services, digital content, etc.
  - If a foreign service provider renders OIDAR services to an unregistered recipient located in India, the foreign service provider is mandatorily required to obtain a registration under Indian GST and pay GST.

GS- I - *MINERAL RESOURCES*

- **UN Secretary-General's Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals (CETMs)** released "**Resourcing the Energy Transition: Principles to Guide Critical Energy Transition Minerals Towards Equity and Justice**"
- **About the Report:**
  - Demand for CETMs is expected to triple by 2030 as the world transitions from fossil fuels to renewable energy.
  - They include Rare Earth Elements, copper, cobalt, nickel, lithium, graphite, cadmium, selenium etc.

GS- II - *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

- The third edition of **India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X)** Summit concluded in the USA.
- **INDUS-X Initiative:**
  - Launched in June, 2023 by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and Indian Ministry of Defense (MoD).
  - Objective: Expand the strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between our governments, businesses, and academic institutions.

➡ DRDO successfully conducts the first phase of field firing trials of **'Zorawar' tanks.**

- It is a **light-tank** designed to provide the Indian army with enhanced capabilities at high altitude.

- Jointly developed by the DRDO and private sector firm L&T.

- Named after the legendary General Zorawar Singh who led multiple successful victories in Tibet.

- Tanks are **amphibious**, making them versatile for operations in riverine regions.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

CO-LOCATION FACILITY
- Also known as **Proximity Hosting** allows brokers to place their servers on the premises of stock exchanges (equipped with suitable infrastructure) for a fee.
- Due to their proximity with stock exchange servers, they provide faster price feeds, quicker execution of trades leading to significant profits.

ACCOUNT AGGREGATOR (AA)
- Helps an individual securely and digitally access and share information from one financial institution they have an account with any other regulated financial institution in AA network.
- It enables the flow of data between Financial Information Providers and Financial Information Users.
- It is a type of **RBI regulated entity** which needs the consent of individuals for sharing data.

KLEPTOPARASITISM
- It is a form of feeding where one animal takes prey from another that has caught, killed, or otherwise prepared, including stored food.
  » E.g., Sperm Whales, Western Gulls, Hyenas etc.
- It can be intraspecific, where the parasite is the same species as the victim, or interspecific, where the parasite is a different species.

COELACANTHS
- They are deep-sea fish that live off the coasts of southern Africa and Indonesia.
- They are evolutionary unique lobe finned fish (having robust bones in their fins similar to bones in our arms).
- More closely related to tetrapods (animals with backbones and 4 limbs like frogs) than to most other fishes.

ENERGY TRILEMMA
- It consists of three often conflicting challenges related to energy which need to be balanced in the context of the rapidly changing energy sector.
- The trilemma comprises:
  » **Energy Security:** Capacity to meet present and future energy demand reliably through robust supply chains.
  » **Affordability:** Equitable access to energy.
  » **Sustainability:** Transitioning towards mitigating environmental impact of energy use and climate change impacts.