



INSIGHTS SECURE - 2014

Compilation of Q&A December 1st
Week - 2014

By

The Undercover Group

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1st Dec 2014

GS3

Q1). "The 'payment bank' initiative of RBI is both not viable and unwise." Comment.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/debashis-basu-a-payment-bank-won-t-pay-114113000699_1.html

Ans:

Recently RBI has come up with a draft policy for starting Payment Banks and applications for licenses are welcomed. There are many reasons against the Payment banks which raises doubts on it's usefulness while at the same time it gives hope to provide financial service to the last mile of our nation.

Reasons raising doubt on it's viability.

1. Already bigger commercial banks with same facilities are present.
2. Payment banks can't accept deposit exceeding 1 lakh. So, if a customer has more money anyhow she will be in need of commercial bank.
3. With no clear guideline about what will be revenue generating sources for Payment Banks, it is making it doubtful about financial sustainability of Payment Banks.
4. Attracting new customers for Payment bank will be loss bearing at the starting as they will have to offer higher interest rates also free transactions which will lead to no incentives to them.
5. Only Indian Postal system will be dominating the Payment banking arena because of it's vast network to the farthest hinterland.
6. It is doubted that RBI being infamous for very strict in granting the Licenses to new comer, how would it will deal with Payment banking licenses which will deal entirely with rural and first timer money transactions doer.

But at this stage the viability of Payment bank can't be judged, because it is still in the stage of alteration. RBI must make sure that the service provided by PB will be errorless and in easiest way possible to attract people from lower rungs of society who are apprehensive to approach commercial banks. PB may act as a connecting bridge for poor rural population to bring near to financial inclusion and link them slowly with Direct Benefit Transfer through Jan Dhan Yojana. Focus should be on Migrant labours or installing PB's ATM near slums or footpath dwellers who are often mobile and keep shifting their place for employment. They can access the PB's facility to send and receive remittance from any part of India. And most importantly, if RBI finds that very lesser number of corporate, retailer companies interested in getting licenses than it may make it more profitable by lowering SLR, allowing to issue insurance, increasing deposit limits etc.. This will ensure that a draft with goodwill for rural population should not fall in infant stage because of unwise guidelines.

GS - 2

Q2) Critically examine India's achievements in meeting the targets of Millennium Development Goals.

Article : http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/subir-gokarn-half-full-half-empty-114113000700_1.html

Ans -

India's performance in achieving the targets of the Millennium Development Goals can be termed a mixed success with much scope for improvement.

Our performance in the following indicators has been commendable:

1. Achieving Universal Primary education - The primary school enrolment ratio is approximately 90%. However concerns remain over the quality of education as well as the dropping higher education enrolment ratio.
2. Eradicating Poverty - We are on track to achieving the target of halving the poverty ratio by 2015.
3. Eliminating Gender disparities in Education - There has been much success in achieving this goal in primary and secondary level, but higher education is still a concern
4. Ensuring environmental sustainability - We are 'moderately on track'
5. Global partnership for development - There is increasing involvement of the private sector in the development process in India and hence we are 'on track'.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS - 'Moderately on target'

However progress on the following targets has been lagging:

1. Eradicating hunger
2. Reducing the Infant and Maternal Mortality ratio - Maternal Mortality ratio figures are lagging relative to the infant mortality rates in addition to both being slow in progress

There is much regional disparities and variations in these indices throughout the country notwithstanding the disparities between indicators. Therefore we should take following steps to accelerate the process:

1. Adopt localised plans of action to meet the region specific needs

2. There should be multi pronged strategy to improve our performance in health indicators by improving access to drinking water and sanitation

GS2

Q3) Examine what steps have been taken to manage the border between India and Bangladesh to stop illegal migration and infiltration from Bangladesh to India.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/modi-for-land-swap-deal-with-bangladesh-to-stop-infiltration-114120100064_1.html

Ans:

The problem of illegal migration & infiltration from Bangladesh to India has been a major point of conflict between the two countries. India has been actively pursuing this problem from the days General Ershad to Khaleda Zia when she visited India in 1992. Recent govt has suggested going ahead with Land deal with Bangladesh to solve this problem permanently.

Following measures have been taken in the past to contain this problem:

- 1). Since Bangladesh refuses to accept that the Bangladeshis are illegally migrating; India decided to fence the border and has adopted push back policy, which sometimes has resulted in tension in the border.
- 2). Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act, 1983: IMDT Act was passed in 1983 by Parliament but due to its poor performance was struck down by SC in 2005 & Foreigners Act 1945 was asked to be enforced throughout India.
- 3). In 2003 the BJP government introduced Amendment to the Citizenship Act which for the first time defined 'illegal migrants' by inserting clause b to section 2 of Citizenship Act 1956.
- 3). Both the countries have put in place joint Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) signed in July 2011 to co-operate on these issues.
- 4). Historic Assam Accord was signed between Indian Govt and the agitating parties in 1985 concerning this issue of illegal migration.

In the absence of bilateral agreement which lays down the procedure for deportation and given the position of the Bangladesh government on the issue India has adopted the policy of push back while Bangladeshi Government denies the existence of any such problem.

Bangladeshi narrative of denial simply denotes that it doesn't realize that it is harming its own interests by not coming forward to address this issue.

This problem demands a close co-operation between both the countries on a bilateral plane and any further delay will only cause this problem to fester & linger until it goes out of control threatening the fabric of peace on both sides.

Cursory Reads:

- 1). http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/PoliticsOfIllegalImmigration_sspattanaik_160514.html
- 2). <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/india-resolving-the-bangladesh-immigration-issue/Sangai-Manipur-Tourism-Festival>

GS2

Q4) What do you understand by 'Development'? Critically discuss with examples how important is people's participation in development process

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/development-as-a-peoples-movement/article6649855.ece>

Ans:

The all-round progress of a country in its material resources and human resources alongwith overall improvement of the societal values of the population can be termed as development. Development requires better interaction between the natural world and humans, which can be possible if greater number of people have an equal say in how the interaction is to occur.

Currently, the economic growth in India is majorly technology driven. Hence, the rate of growth of jobs has not been in sync with our economic growth. Therefore, although our material capital is growing, development of people is not. Also, this growth has been associated by environmental degradation. This economic growth cannot be termed as development then as it is devoid of any people's participation.

On the other hand, places like tribal districts in Maharashtra, who have been accorded management rights over Community Forest Resources under the Forest Rights Act, are experiencing development on the back of a people's movement. For example, their decision to pick Tendu fruits instead of incessant harvesting of their leaves has resulted in healthier trees and greater fruit yield. Here we can see that the tribals are managing the resources holistically, instead of mindless exploitation.

People's involvement has been encouraged in India through the 73rd and 74th Amendment, the Biological Diversity Act, the PESA, the FRA etc. Decentralization and sustainable resource usage alongwith focus on community development should be the stepping stones to achievement of genuine development

GS3(S&T)

Q5) "The government should contemplate the establishment of an Indian information technology service. The raison d'être is the prime minister's vision of a digital India."

Comment

Main Article: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/an-indian-information-technology-service/99/>

Ans:

Technology has pervaded deep into the lives of people. Even the poor people though devoid of broadband have somehow found ways to connect to the internet through mobile internet. Implying more than staggering 800 million people are 'smart'. It is a fit case for overhauling information structure of india.

P.M.'s digital india initiative, for want of fructification needs dedicated service that is equipped with adequate manpower that is skilled and not boggled by the bureaucratic delays.

Hence for that an Indian information technology service is apt, that allows meritorious students directly graduated from college. The recruitment may be on contract basis say 2-5 years. It will ensure flexibility as well as choice to both government and also to the applicant.

Each department in the government is willy nilly connected to the IT sector. Many department s have dedicated IT corner in them. With so much vastness and no specialist manpower the technology enhancement is slowed down. The new service would be a good integration and would act as a coordinator for various departments. It will act as both line and staff department. The policy framework will then specifically focus on the technology impact assessment.

The above case reasons for setting up the service. Equipping everyone of technology is no mean task and government needs to gear up for it. However service alone does not means success. It's just a start, more will follow

02 Dec 2014

GS4

Q1).Recently a principal of a government aided college was appointed as a board member of a famous liquor company. Identify the ethical issues involved and critically comment on them.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/defining-an-ethical-issue-114120101277_1.html

Ans:

Ethics being a moral principle for governing oneself or group's behaviour is a very subjective term. It varies based on individual ideologies, culture, context and upbringing.

In the cited case of a competent Principal of Govt. aided college being appointed as famous liquor company's BoD. Here 3 ethical issues are involved:

1. Personal Ethics: It is moral principle of oneself based on her outlook toward society and upbringing. The person in question had already been in BoD of 6 MNCs shows her competencies and multitude exposure. So her PERSONAL ETHICS ALLOWED her to take variety of roles from a college principal to beverage company decision voter.

2. Societal Ethics: It is the moral responsibility one holds toward society. It is clear in this case that She showed a clear goodwill toward society by holding a principal position and her past position is appearing as incoherent with his present position. But as far as her tenure of principal or condition didn't stop her to take such position and she is taking all decision in Beverage firm lawfully. Societal Ethics is met as she is not doing anything unlawful or against society.

3. Constitutional and Legal Ethics: It is regulating one's behaviour based on constitutionality and legality of the behavior. Article 47 is Directive Principle of States Policy is for states and it is non abiding. It can't regulate, legalise or monitor individual's behaviour. Untill unless the company under her guidance doesn't do anything unlawful, she has met this ethics.

As it is clear that Liquor these days has become booming business and it attracts talents from all sector as it's Board of Directors for apt decision making. This can be marked by observing that filmstar and sportstar are advertising for them, when ethics of sport strongly oppose use of alcohol. In this case, Principal is not doing anything unethical untill unless she abides by lawful practices.

GS - 3

Q2) The profitability of goat and sheep husbandry is steadily improving, thanks to the growing demand and rising prices of these items, but there are also problems. Write a note on the scenario of goat and sheep husbandry in India, associated problems and solutions.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/surinder-sud-fighting-the-goat-plague-with-ingenuity-114120101280_1.html

Ans -

India's 55% population are engaged in agriculture and other 12% in primary sector. Out of all these population majority domesticate cattles for their daily usage for milk, dung, buffer money and short term money making. Goat and Sheep constitute a major part of rural animals because they are easy to maintain, purchase, sell, monitor and transport. But there are some basic problems which rural population are exposed to. Some problems and their solutions are:

1. Since long time rural population suffered fatal viral outbreak cattle disease also called Peste des Petits Ruminants or PPR. PPR has high mortality and vast occurrence. Though

there are affordable and easily administrable indigenous vaccines available for the disease but unawareness of cattle dweller proves more fatal. Government should spread awareness and distribute the vaccines for free in Gram panchayat. Also a Pashu Mela can be organised on monthly basis on every tehsil where such information can be passed and vaccines distributed.

2. Goat and Sheep breed of India are more tolerant toward drought but the yield of meat and milk are very low. This leads to farmers still using local breed of goat and sheeps in good rainfall area too. Government can provide high quality semen for artificial insemination to in animal husbandary centres of each tehsil to benefit farmers and enrich quality of small ruminants.

3. Diary and Meat production in India is one of the most unorganised sector. Major population of Goat and sheep are used for household use, this leads to no income generating incentives to farmers. If block level dairy and goat/sheep purchase organised, it will result to motivation to farmers to expand the domestication to profit making level. It will also lead to export of milk and milk of goat/sheep, which is in great demand in European countries where Cow milk/meat already in abundant. But small ruminant can't survive.

We can clearly see climatic dividend India endowed with which enables goat and sheep easily thrive here. We can scale the household domestication to profit making business by spreading awareness for vaccines, Pashu Mela for health checkup, milk yielding, milk preservation and purchase by govt on daily basis.

Q3) Critically comment on the causes, growth and nature of religious fundamentalism and extremism in Nigeria.

Main Article: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/02/opinion/growing-up-fearful-in-nigeria.html?emc=edit_ae_20141201&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=49615428&r=0

Ans:

Religion could serve and has indeed served as an instrument of social harmony and integration amongst many civilisations but as many texts put "its a double edged sword". Religious bigots have attempted to legitimise violence in the name of religion from time immemorial and Nigeria it seems is plagued by the same problem.

Inhabitants of Nigeria are from two religious groups viz. Muslims and Christians. North western and North eastern part is dominated by Muslims while South Eastern & South Western parts are dominated by Christians. The religious violence since Nigeria's return to Democracy in 1999 have been characterised by clashes between these two groups.

Major Causes:

1). **Religious intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism:** They form the base structure upon which the super structure of religious violence rests.

2). *Obstructive and disruptive modes of Worship*: The annoying model of worship employed by both religions like organization of mass crusades and revivals on public highways by Christians and similarly blocking of public roads during Friday (Juma'at) prayers has triggered clashes in areas having people from both groups in equal numbers.

3). *Derogatory preaching and stereotyping*: Preaching one's own faith as superior and ridiculing or mocking another faith is the underlying cause of Religious violence in Nigeria.

4). *Government patronage, religious, preferentialism and marginalization*: The patronage of one religion by public officials at the expense of the other also causes violent clashes.

In order to facilitate inter-religious dialogue, Nigeria Inter State Council (NISC) was formed in 2000 but it has failed to further its goals. Government should now try to convene a National Religious Summit wherein a collective dialogue from all the religious stakeholders is done so that a comprehensive National Policy on religion and state could be framed.

Cursory read:

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0CDcQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ajol.info%2Findex.php%2Fajcr%2Farticle%2FviewFile%2F78703%2F69042&ei=dnp9VMbcOsuKuAStjIHQAQ&usg=AFQjCNGdNGqE1UGyT0z-rkzWggJljkPjUw&sig2=fIH--vwxlxRcYJ9SFyMyTw&bvm=bv.80642063,d.c2E>

Q4) Critically examine why the Bhopal Gas Tragedy is considered as one of the worst industrial disasters in recent human history.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/contamination-still-hounds-bhopal-residents/article6653523.ece>

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/no-closure-for-bhopal/article6653266.ece>

Ans:

In the 1960s, the Indian government tried to increase agricultural productivity to become food self-sufficient and a chemical company Union Carbide Limited was allowed to open its operations in Bhopal in 1970 to produce pesticides.

In 1983, due to losses incurred by the company, there was downsizing of the plant's manpower as well as the machinery which included the safety measures. On December 2, 1984, 40 tons of Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) vapor and liquid leaked from the plant causing 2500 deaths. The damage was aggravated due to the close proximity of residential areas and hospitals to the plant.

The immediate health effects included burning, redness and watering of the eyes, corneal damage, vomiting, unconsciousness and death. The long term effects included permanent eye damage, damage of the respiratory system, increase of instances of miscarriage, post-traumatic stress disorder etc. The environmental impacts included pollution of Bhopal's underground water supply with heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants, soil contamination etc.

Union Carbide has paid \$470 million as compensation but it is widely accepted to be insufficient for the cleanup operations. Several acts were enacted by the Indian Government after the tragedy which includes the Environment Protection Act (1986), the Factories Amendment Act (1987), the Air Amendment Act (1987), the Hazardous Waste Rules (1989) and the Public Liability Insurance Act (1991)

GS2 (Polity)

Q5) Critically analyse the Constitution (the 119th amendment) bill that was recently cleared by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/bill-sought-to-ratify-boundary-pact/article6653297.ece>

Ans:

In order to transfer territories between India and Bangladesh the first schedule of the states associated with transfer (Assam, West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya) needs to be amended which is taken care by the 119th constitutional amendment bill.

Benefits:

- a) The long standing administration difficulty associated with the enclaves or enclaves within enclaves will be solved which in turn improves our border security curbing illegal immigration.
- b) Moreover the difficulty of people in exercising their rights, citizenship and their mobility will be improved as administration can serve the people hassle free.
- c) The diplomatic relations between the two countries may improve leading to increased cooperation in political, social and economic spheres.
- d) As part of our Look East policy this amendment can enhance the development of NE states by constructive relations with Bangladesh.

Shortcomings:

- a) India has to loss more lands compared to Bangladesh where the states are raising objection.
- b) This land swap may encourage independent statehood demand either in Kashmir or NE.

However the administrative difficulty and the burden of the people in enclaves both to India and Bangladesh should be given importance rather than the quantity of land loss between them.

GS2

Q6) "This planned prohibition of pornography and any other objectionable content will ultimately come at a cost to our collective interest in the freedom of expression while simultaneously turning a deaf ear to what science is or isn't able to account for. A web filter opens the doors to abuse, stupidity, official petty-mindedness and a habit of giving up and reaching for the easiest way out." In the light of government's plan to filter the web, critically comment on the statement.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/the-ostensible-reason-for-a-web-filter/article6653271.ece>

Ans:

India is trying to censor the internet on pornographic content that has triggered fears over digital freedom in the world's largest democracy. The step is initiated to ban porn and prevent sexual crimes on women like rape, molestation and other forms of sexual harassment. Senior government officials discussed how web filters can be used to contain adult content. Some of its outcomes:

- 1) Misuse of powers as the government would prevent the freedom of speech by blocking the content
- 2) It will lead to a lack of transparency as more blocks would be implemented more quickly as per the advice of the government which could be for their personal interest.
- 3) The list will be shared with Internet service providers (ISPs) so that these sites are immediately blocked. There is a wide chance that if blocking takes place on a large volume, then it may affect Internet speed too.

How effective:

- 1) Content blocks won't be much effective in India since the sites are hosted outside and firewalls are often bypassed via proxy servers.
- 2) Access to blocked portals will still be possible, as people will turn to a variety of indirect methods, including proxy servers, to bypass filters. One example of this is the torrent website The Pirate Bay which is banned in over 20 countries but remains accessible via multiple proxy servers.

Despite India's IT sector making tremendous progress, authorities remain ill-equipped to enforce the ban, particularly in terms of digital forensics and also the numerous websites that the banned ones may spawn.

GS2

Q7) Critically examine the merits and demerits of the recent proposal by the National Commission for Women to legalise prostitution.

Main Article: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/exploitation-by-law/99/>

Ans:

Sexual or the exchange of sexual services for money is not illegal per se in India especially when done by women over 18 years voluntarily. However soliciting, owning or managing a brothel or living off the earning of a women doing sex work and pimping are crimes. Recent proposal by the national commission for women to legalise prostitution opens up a debate for its acceptance.

Merits

Prostitutes too have the right to live with dignity under article 21 as they would be saved with police atrocious and social stigma.

Their dependents can benefit from government schemes like better education and employment opportunities.

Sex workers will be covered under labour laws giving them the social security benefits, EPFO.

Regulation would remove the condition to serve clients in unhygienic, unhealthy condition that leads them to sexually transmitted diseases.

Exploitation by pimps, brothel owners will be a act of crime under the law.

Demerits

Legalizing will lead to a wrong message sent to the boys who would look women as sexual commodity.

Making it legal sex trade will benefit pimps to force more women into prostitution thus giving rise to more human trafficking.

More and more women would try to indulge in the act to earn easy and quick money and ultimately it will expand this immoral activity.

Prostitution can never be a legitimate business because it will always be associated with crime, corruption, class, mass sexual exploitation and human trafficking. End result would be broken families and dysfunctional youth- just like in the West. The only alternative can be to provide an employment to sex-workers by the government and put pimps into jails.

3rd Dec 2014

GS2

Q1) Examine the merits and demerits of modernising and running India's large railway stations in the public-private-partnership (PPP) mode.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/private-stations-promised-114120201299_1.html

Ans:

PPP in Railways has already been experimented with IRCTC, CONCOR etc, but with mixed success. With FDI relaxation, the government is aiming to stimulate private participation in the railways. The Expert Group for Modernisation of Indian Railways envisages PPP investment of over Rs. 4 lac crore in next 10 years.

Merits:

1. PPPs can help leverage private capital to finance the modernisation and Infrastructure upgrade plans of a cash-strapped Railways.
2. It will attract private investment by leveraging the land around and airspace above every station for commercial purposes.
3. It will allow the Railways to focus on its core function – Signalling of trains and maintaining tracks.
4. PPP can help develop raiiside warehouses, thus solving the last-mile connectivity problem of freight movement.
5. Security issues of goods in transit can be eliminated with privately owned logistics parks.
6. With PPPs, efficient cost-effective service delivery can be offered with access to modern technology.

Demerits:

1. The cost of travel could substantially increase for the citizenry.
2. Previous experience has shown that Railways cannot effectively monitor private delivery.
3. Private participation will affect the employment scenario of Railways; currently the world's largest employer.
4. Bureaucratic hurdles, pricing agreement, lack of regulatory oversight and evaluation criteria can prove as impediments.
5. Emergence of private monopolies if right policy approach is not undertaken.
6. Issues of PSU mindset, culture change, and managerial overhaul will need to be addressed.

The focus for Railways should be to create a conducive environment for private sector participation, especially in non-core areas. Role of Indian Railways Regulatory Authority must be strengthened, concession agreement must get the pricing right and minimum standards of service must be laid down.

GS - 3

Q2) Critically comment on the significance of Iraqi government's recent long-term accord with the autonomous Kurdish region to share the country's oil wealth and military resources.

Main Article: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/03/world/middleeast/kurd-pact-with-baghdad-against-islamic-state.html?emc=edit_ae_20141202&nl=todayshheadlines&nid=49615428&r=0

Ans -

There has been differences between sunni majority Kurdish region and Shia majority region of Iraq and demands of independence by oil rich Kurdish tribe. The current deal of paying salary by Baghdad to the Kurdish army in exchange for military and oil support is a significant step.

The advantages of deal are

1) Geostrategic - a) It will lead to a temporary hiatus between hostility of Kurdish region and central government at Baghdad b) Turkey will not be able to instigate Kurd region and will loose power c) US influence in Kurdish region will increase as Kurd militia will help in fighting with ISIS d) ISIS power is supposed to reduce as Kurd military supported by US airforce will enter ISIS occupied region

2) Economic - a) Increased revenue for Baghdad and Erbil as Oil stocked in Kurdish region will be able to reach markets through govt channel in Baghdad leading b) Decreased financial burden on US for fighting ISIS alone

Demerits

- 1) Sunni Kurdish militia can turn back on Shia central government after getting oil money and arms from US
- 2) It may be only a temporary hiatus of hostility between Baghdad and Erbil
- 3) US control over people of Iraq may be resented by the people

It seems that for the time being geostrategic and economic stability of Kurdish region in Iraq has been achieved as a result of fighting a common enemy in ISIS. But the government needs to be cautious and keep on taking conciliatory and confidence building measures for a long term stable relationship with the Kurds.

Q3).Examine why is India reluctant to sign the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) of WTO. Also examine why is India facing renewed pressure to sign the ITA?

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/china-us-trade-pact-puts-pressure-on-india-to-fast-track-electronics-manufacturing-114120200182_1.html

Ans:

Information and technology Agreement (ITA) a plurilateral agreement was originally signed in 1997 and requires participant countries to eliminate their tariffs on a specific list of information technology (IT) and telecommunication products. This agreement covers around 97% of the world trade in defined IT products.

Recently, US & China reached an agreement on a deal that would expand the list of goods falling under ITA. This has increased the pressure on developing countries including India to sign the pact. India on the other hand is concerned that, reducing tariffs to zero will decrease the import costs of the items covered under ITA and will only help India if it expands its exports & boosts its ailing local manufacturing sector.

It will also impact the recently launched "Make in India" initiative by govt of India.

An examination of Hardware industry indicates that there is an increasing tendency of manufacturers becoming assemblers of the same products due to a substantial increase in the imported content. This also impacts employment generation in this sector.

Hence, India should implement steps to encourage indigenous manufacturing sector so that as and when ITA is signed it doesn't adversely impacts the Indian interests.

Cursory reads:

- 1). http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/inftec_e/ita_map_e.htm
- 2). <http://web.ita.doc.gov/ITI/itiHome.nsf/51a29d31d11b7ebd85256cc600599b80/56c5c43580267d2285256cf70069b2a0?OpenDocument>
- 3). <http://www.ibtimes.com/information-technology-agreement-us-china-reach-deal-expand-trade-pact-high-tech-1721663>

GS2

Q4) Critically comment on the key recommendations of the Tax Administration and Reform Commission (TARC) which submitted its third report recently to the government.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/bring-back-fbt-bcct-tax-large-farmers-tarc-114120201279_1.html

Ans:

The TARC headed by Parthsharithy Shome has submitted third Tax reform report to Finance ministry. It provides a framework to increase tax base and improve compliance.

The key recommendations are:

Expanding the base:

- Reintroduce Fringe Benefits Tax and Banking Cash Transaction Tax
- Identify corporates registered with RoC but not filing tax returns
- Double the number of income taxpayers to 60 million in three years
- Bring large farmers in tax net; get small retailers to enter banking network
- Review and enlarge scope of presumptive profit estimation scheme

- Bridge gap between circle rate and market value of property
- Increase wealth tax base by raising threshold and decreasing rate
- Focus exclusively on high net worth individuals by making a separate cell
- Phase out unwarranted tax exemptions continuing in form of tax preferences
- Use database of Medical Council of India, Aadhaar to locate non-filers

Compliance management

- Issue timely clarification circulars to reduce disputes and litigation
- Desist from filing appeal against well-reasoned and sound orders
- Make customer convenience, compliance cost central aspect of any planning
- Integrate central excise, service tax and customs audits
- Create a separate functional vertical for prosecution

Impact assessment

Consider stakeholder consultation as an independent tool for decision-making
Use impact assessment as a tool to review existing regulations

This, as the committee feels, will improve the tax base and increase compliance and tax collection and help in decreasing tax theft and improve the fiscal deficit and provide more revenue for the development of the country

Q5) "In India, some cities are changed from being a congenial space of shared amenities and relationships to a fearful nightmare of private strongholds and walled compounds – insecure, insular and isolated." Critically examine why and its consequences.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/insecure-and-insular-in-urban-india/article6656707.ece>

Ans:

The phenomena of rapid urbanization observed in India in the past two decades and the rise in the size and number of cities has been associated with the growth of income of the people. People from all walks of life settle in cities to carry out their livelihood cities and this phenomenon should have resulted in a greater feeling of inclusiveness among them.

However, we see that the rise of cities has been associated with an increase in the number of "gated communities" which can be viewed as islands of affluence among seas of poverty and neglect. While earlier people would pool their resources to do a job, now they insist on procuring amenities individually. The increase in the number of people has resulted in greater rich-poor divide and the consumerist tendencies of the rich have cause environmental degradation whose ill effects are confronted mostly by the poor.

The hierarchy visible in cities, where the rich and powerful are protected by their money and influence while the poor are left to fend for their own sends a wrong message to the people that in cities divisions by caste, class, rank, economics, social order and professional position will be prevalent and anyone not conforming with these norms would have to lead a life of desolation. This situation prompts many to pursue an unsustainable consumerist lifestyle.

Aiming for greater sharing of resources and developing community participation in determining its usage is the way forward to ensure an accommodative, pollution-free and modern society in our cities.

GS2

Q6) Examine why the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) system was introduced in schools and why is there an opposition now to this system?

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/learning-beyond-textbooks/article6656710.ece>

Ans:

Indian education system has been criticized for being monotonous, promoting rote learning rather than knowledge enhancement. In lieu of this lacunae and to do away with exams predominantly testing one's memory, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) was formulated. CCE, which formed a part of RTE Act, enacted in 2008 was expected to change the face of education in India.

The expectations stemming from RTE Act and associated CCE were

1. CCE enunciated learning in a more conducive and creative environment leading to overall development of a student.
2. Gradual, continuous assessment of children coupled with sensitive teaching techniques boosting a child's morale.
3. RTE emphasized on mandatory education upto the age of 14 yrs. The 'no detention' clause till board exams takes the pressure off children.

On the contrary the new initiatives has come in for opposition mainly due to:

1. Inability of CCE to prepare students for Entrance exams.
2. 'No detention' wrongly perceived as 'No Assessment' due to which children loose the drive to perform. This is in turn leading to drop in performance.
3. Implementation level issues like basic school infrastructure, teaching facilities not up to the mark to accommodate the new initiatives.

Hence, a thorough check on the present implementation techniques and demands must be assessed to better sort out the associated lacunae in education sector in India.

4th Dec 2014

GS3:

Q1). Critically examine the reasons behind increasing cyber security threats around the world. Explain what needs to be done to mitigate these threats.

Main Article: http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/12/02/hacked-vs-hackers-game-on/?emc=edit_ae_20141203&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=49615428&r=0

Ans:

With the advent of computerized era, more prominent threats came in our lives i.e Cyber security threats hijacking sensitive and important information from our lives.

Security threats surged 62% as per security company Symantec. Now it is no more only a threat from other countries, thanks to Edward Snowden revelation about NSA that companies worry about protecting their networks from own Government. The main reasons behind upsurging of such threats can be:

- 1) stealing Intellectual property rights by nation states
- 2) technical approach than strategic like use of prevention or detection techniques - Firewall and antivirus
- 3) lack of liability and urgency to take steps after the hint that security is compromised
- 4) Organized crime
- 5) demolish organisation for revenge etc.
- 6) expected benefit risk ratio in hackers favour

Reasons can be many for upsurge but there should be certain measures to mitigate these threats.

- 1) Strict regulation for cyber security. Need to build comprehensive cyber security plan.
- 2) protect the most valuable data by identifying and separating them from rest of the network and applying encryption on them.
- 3) incorporation of breach detection plan, secure authentication scheme and white listing of trusted network.
- 4) More layered approach, more secure payment schemes and monthly auditing
- 5) Alert if unusual activity happen wrt critical data
- 6) making expected net benefits of hackers close to zero or negative

To conclude organization and government needs to be more vigilant and proactive with implementation of strict cyber security regulation. Strategic approach can put check on such malicious activities.

GS - 3

Q2) It is said that Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in India have completely failed - of the 564 SEZs formally approved, only 192 were operational as of June this year. Examine the reasons behind this failure.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/sezs-hobbled-by-taxes-infrastructure-114120300440_1.html

Ans -

The concept of Special Economic Zone(SEZ) was first mooted in India post liberalisation in 1997.It was initiated as part of India's Exim policy to boost the economy. It was observed that Indian economic scenario entered a high growth phase spearheaded by the IT sector. The associated tax holidays and exemptions are the major attractions to investors in SEZ.

However, off late it was seen that SEZ operation has comparatively slowed down. Only 192 out of the 564 approved SEZs could become operational. The slowdown is owing to

1. Withdrawal of Minimum Alternate tax (MAT) and Dividend Distribution Tax(DDT) exemptions - This has brought down the investor confidence by making SEZ investment unattractive.
2. Lack of complementary infrastructure like proper transport facilities comprising of roads, railways and port connectivity have made transportation of finished goods complex.
3. Land Acquisition Problem - It is one of the greatest problem affecting infrastructure projects in India. Land acquisition is accompanied by bureaucratic and legal hurdles in clearances.

As India enters a new phase with constructive initiatives like Make In India Campaign, it is imperative to simplify the norms and procedure for a conducive business environment.

GS2

Q3) To realize the dream of 'Digital India', India's current overall policies for telecommunications don't serve our interests. Critically discuss various roadblocks that exist in realizing Digital India dream.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/shyam-ponappa-a-road-map-for-digital-india-114120301186_1.html

Ans:

To realize the dream of 'Digital India', network connectivity has to be brought to the furthest regions of the country and enough bandwidth should be provided to consumers so that they can enjoy a streamlined internet services. However, its implementation has been unsatisfactory.

The presence of numerous country wide networks which connect at the customer ends on their own is causing redundancy of infrastructure in urban area and lack of it in rural areas. This is also increasing the capital investment for companies, preventing new players from entering the market. This inequality can be countered by devising a revenue sharing model based on usage of existing infrastructure and its expansion in rural areas should be drawn up.

On the administrative front, the requirement of operators to win their own spectrum at auctions has prevented the facilitation of shared network solutions. Hence, this has decreased the number and performance of operators due to the limited bandwidth available to them in their exclusive-use bands. Permitting spectrum sharing between primary users, such as defence and defence-related services may solve this problem.

BBNL is planning to make broadband available to all service providers in villages through the NOFN plan. However, delays in its implementation and unclear last-mile connectivity issues are serious roadblocks to be considered.

Our success in creating a 'Digital India' will hinge on the efficiency of the operators in utilizing the available bandwidth to them. Easing entry in the sector and dealing with the above-mentioned roadblocks is the need of the hour.

GS3 (Environment)

Q4) The committee, headed by former Cabinet secretary T S R Subramanian, on environment and forests has recommended that the plethora of existing statutes and institutions governing the interrelated fields of environment and forests be merged into a single umbrella law. Explain the significance of this recommendation.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/time-for-one-law-114120301180_1.html

Ans:

The Subramanian Committee was set up to review the various Environmental protection laws in the country and suggest measures for their streamlining. The government hopes to attract greater investments by such easing of regulations.

The Committee has recommended that all the existing environmental laws be encompassed under a single Environmental Management Act which would also include provisions for the setting up of National Environment Authority (NEMA) and State Environment Management Authorities (SEMA) to take up the powers of the pollution control boards.

The law would also require the setting up of special district-level courts to look into infringements and an administrative tribunal to review clearances. Also, an amendment to the Forest Rights Act has been suggested to provide a clear exception of all linear projects like roads, pipelines etc.

The numerous environmental laws which often overlap and contradict themselves can often be wrongly interpreted leading to undeserved penalization of companies. On the other hand, these complexities often allow unscrupulous companies to bend the laws when

required, leading to an uneven playing field. The committee has tried to address these issues by suggesting a new, comprehensive but simple, and implementable all-encompassing law to plug all possible loopholes.

These recommendations would help in easing businesses to navigate the environment-related laws and will result in higher investments. However, care must be taken to ensure that this restructuring is not considered by companies as dilution of laws and a license to exploit the natural environment

GS2 (International Organizations)

Q5) Recently India opposed a U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) resolution calling on it to voluntarily abandon its nuclear weapons. Do you think it was a right move? Critically comment.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/india-pakistan-reject-call-to-give-up-nuclear-weapons/article6660056.ece>

Ans:

Though the recent UNGA resolution calling on nuclear weapons is not binding India voted against it as there are some valid concerns regarding the nuclear disarmament treaties and other N-weapon holders.

Reason:

- a) India wants to fix accountability on Nuclear Weapon States too where still large weapons exist.
- b) The discriminatory nature of NPT/CTBT with our close proximity to China and Pakistan signifies the future threats it may pose to India.
- c) Even if India has signed this resolution there is no assurance on nuclear disarmament as NWS are free to go with their nuclear arsenal together with sanctions on NNWS.
- d) Civil nuclear deals together with IAEA safeguards and other NSG exemption also support credibility of India in using nuclear materials.

Threats:

- a) As long as the possession of nuclear weapon exists there is a possibility of nuclear accidents and terrorist attack or holding may be disastrous
- b) The reluctant attitude of nuclear weapon holders may encourage nuclear weapons race and aggravate tensions.

India's present stand is justified at short term but at long term it may pose danger where the NWS and NNWS must come together to solve the impasse and work towards the nuclear weapon-free world.

GS3 (S&T)

Q6) Write a short note on significance of the Thirty-Metre Telescope (TMT) being developed in Hawaii.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/indian-systems-for-worlds-largest-telescope/article6660059.ece>

Ans:

World's largest telescope will be constructed at a cost of US\$ 1.47 billion by an international consortium consisting of institutions from the USA, Canada, Japan, India and China. Thirty Meter Telescope, will be installed at the summit of Mauna Kea volcano in Hawaii. It's the first time that the nations have joined a major telescope involved in research on the frontiers of astronomy.

The TMT observatory will be so powerful it will allow scientists to see some 13 billion light years away and get a glimpse into the early years of the universe. TMT will also enable astronomers to study objects in our solar system and stars throughout the Milky Way and its neighbouring galaxies. It will help promote understanding of fundamental issues such as the possible existence of life beyond the solar system

For India who is participating in the development of this telescope besides learning about the universe, India will also gain the technology to manufacture fine aspherical mirror segments India's participation will enable the Indian institutions and industry acquire or gain access to sophisticated technologies of relevance to the country which will later help them manufacture aspherical mirror segments indigenously besides manufacturing for this project.

India will also become a founding member of an important international scientific project. India's contributions in the areas of software systems, segment production and the production of very high precision sensors and actuators are key to the project.

It will be the 30m diameter primary mirror of the telescope, will consist of 492 smaller, hexagonal mirrors, 100 of which will be delivered by India. Japan, China and the US will supply the remainder and Canada will be responsible for constructing the dome.

From the Indian side, this will be a joint project of the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Atomic Energy. It will be anchored in the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) and led by IIA; Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences, Nainital; and Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune. This would enable researchers and students at these institutes to have a great learning experience and would help India grow in the field of astronomy.

Q7) Compare and contrast India's performance in global Corruption Perception Index vis a vis China's performance.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/indias-rank-improves-marginally/article6660063.ece>

Ans:

The global Corruption index is a composite index made up of a combination of surveys and assessments of public sector corruption in a country by international agencies including the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Denmark topped yet again with Somalia at the bottom.

The performance of India improved by 2 points to 85th position better than all its South-Asian neighbors except Bhutan.

China lost 4 points and slipped to 100th position. This shows high growth rate doesn't reduce corruption while India improved its ranking because of its anti-corruption campaign and prosecution of culprits of 2-g scam and Coal scam.

The role and freedom of media in India played an important role which is absent in China.

The Communist Party regime which creates its hegemony in each and every sector has led to increased corruption in China whereas in India a strong Opposition prevents it to an extent.

The permanent regime of Communist Party has also led to a very high rate of corruption which is absent in India due to democratically elected government.

The presence of independent office of CAG checks corruption in India which is absent in China.

This improved ranking will help India in its development in a long run as it will attract more FDI in India. Also India can improve its rank by passing strict anti-corruption laws which are still pending in the Parliament.

GS2 (Foreign policy)

Q8) Critically comment on the nature of India's foreign policy since the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/deconstructing-the-modi-foreign-policy/article6660012.ece>

Ans:

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 coincided with the decline of Congress leadership at the Centre. This led to a succession of weak governments at the Centre until 1998. Hence, even though our economy grew robustly in the 1990s our foreign policy was muddled, and this confusion was primarily beneficial to China, which grew at a greater rate than India and was also able to make strategic inroads into SA.

The fall of Soviet Union resulted in India edging closer to USA and the ASEAN block. The economic liberalization and the USA-Pakistan alliance required us to seek greater engagement with the capitalist economies of the west. The Indo-USA nuclear deal was the turning point of our relationship as USA now started viewing India as a strategic partner and an Asian pivot to China.

Regionally, our foreign policy has not been as successful as is evident from the SAARC's lack of success. This has been primarily due to the brusque policy of domination followed in the preceding decades. The Gujral Doctrine's principles which advocated a policy of pursuing a friendly-neutral relationship with our neighbours has not been reciprocated by them. Our current policy of active engagement and regional cooperation and development is better suited in easing India into the role of a benevolent hegemony.

Presently, India's foreign policy is directed at solving its domestic problems like food security (WTO Agreement), illegal migration (Indo-Bangladesh Land Swap deal), regional cooperation (power grid agreement in SAARC), energy security (removal of NSG restrictions) etc. However, the rise of China and the continued antagonism of Pakistan may compel us to pursue proactive military-centred policies to protect our national interests.

5th+6th Dec 2014

Q1). "Untouchability in India is not just a rural phenomenon, it is also an urban phenomenon as found by recently the India Human Development Survey II." In the light of the findings of this survey, critically comment how and why untouchability persists even in urban regions and what are its implications on society

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/untouchability-exists-114120401281_1.html

Ans:

Untouchability is a social evil attached to India Caste system. It is commonly believed that Untouchability is observed widely in rural area. But a recent survey by University of Maryland and National Council of Applied Economic Research has found that it is equivalently prevalent in Urban areas across. Reason of finding untouchability in Urban areas are:

1. Most Urban resident are one generation migrant from rural area and hence their mindset has not changed.

2. Most housewives are not exposed to progressive culture. And untouchability are more present in household task.
3. Educating adults about untouchability is not common. Fundamental Rights of prohibition of untouchability is limited to books and literature but in actual practice it is missing.
4. Ostracizing lower castes people and segregating them goes unpenalised and unobserved.
5. Mostly lower caste people are still doing low paid and stigmatised odd jobs, this lead to again untouchability practices.

Implications on Society because of prevailing untouchability in Urban area too are:

1. It can keep the dalits devoid of social assistance and employment avenues.
2. It can keep the untouchables from common dwelling areas and hence further poverty and segregation of poverty struck urban dalits.
3. It will lead to more poverty among women of dalit family as they will not get any employment and most worse sufferer would be single mother headed family.

Q2).The amount of black money circulated in the real estate sector in India is said to be larger than that is stashed away in foreign accounts. Critically examine its extent, why it's unregulated and its implications on economy.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/bhupesh-bhandari-an-industry-built-on-black-money-114120401285_1.html

Ans:

The legal real estate sector accounted for nearly 11% of India's GDP in 2011. This sector has seen one of the largest infusions of black money and economists say that the illegal sector is nearly as large if not larger.

The black money siphoned out of India is not only held in foreign Swiss banks. A large portion of this money comes back to India through sham corporations registered in Mauritius as investments, the earnings on which are not taxed in India due to the double tax-avoidance treaty between the two countries. According to a DIPP study, about 38% of FDI came from Mauritius in 2012-13 compared to only 6% from the US.

Regulating black money in the real estate sector becomes difficult as the buyers and sellers of land keep the value of their transaction hidden to evade stamp duty and income tax. Central bank rules prohibit bank loans to purchase land. This void is filled up by wealthy individuals, including politicians. Later, some of this money is poured into election campaign donations from developers, say private equity investors, real estate consultants and sector analysts. Those same developers are awarded with plots of land with attractive prices or in getting project approvals and the cycle continues.

The greatest implication has been the sharp and sustained rise in land prices, making housing unaffordable for majority of the Indians. Hoarding of black money is affecting the

economic growth due to the lower capital available for investments and also adversely affecting the welfare schemes undertaken by the government.

Q3) It is said that India is on the verge of facing “technological unemployment” in coming years. What do you understand by this? If it’s true, examine its implications for India.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/shyamal-majumdar-technological-unemployment-114120401284_1.html

Ans:

The term technological unemployment was coined by economist John Maynard Keynes. It refers to the unemployment caused because of technological advancement. With improvement in technology more jobs are lost than those created this causes massive unemployment. This is evident from our experience during industrial revolution.

But today this issue has become even more crucial as technological innovation today would not only result in loss of jobs for unskilled workers but also for skilled workers.

In Indian context this is really a huge problem. Today India has largest youth population and need to create millions of job to utilize the demographic dividend. And we are trying to tackle the problem of unemployment by encouraging skill development through various degrees and courses. Government is running different skill development programmes.

But the pace of technological advancement severely endangers the possibility of creating millions of job. This is evident from our recent jobless growth.

Today imparting basic skills through normal degrees and courses is not a guarantee for job at all. If this technological unemployment unveils in large extent than situation in India will become uncontrollable.

In current scenario market demand people who have specific distinguished skills in different fields. Our government should encourage diversification of education in various fields and innovations which can increase employment in different areas should be promoted.

Q4) Critically comment on the geopolitical implications of falling prices of oil on oil-producing countries.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/martin-feldstein-the-geopolitical-impact-of-cheap-oil-114120401287_1.html

Ans:

The recent slide of oil to less than 80\$ per barrel is mainly due to the shale oil boom in the US and low economic activity in Europe and China leading to lower demand. Recently, in a meeting in Vienna the OPEC countries decided to continue producing oil at the present rate and letting the oil prices fall. Although, this policy will benefit countries like India who are net oil importers, there are some important geopolitical implications.

Countries like Iran, Venezuela and Russia may face social unrest as oil is a major revenue earner for these countries. This pressure may cause Russia to seek an agreement with the West on the Ukraine issue as it is already reeling under many US-backed sanctions. Iran may also agree to the stringent agreements of the IAEA on its nuclear facilities in exchange for lifting of sanctions.

Other countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which are US allies, may not face any danger in the short term as their oil production is cheap. However, the recent Arab Spring, which was kept at bay by the oil monarchies by promise of greater welfare expenditure, may find its way to these countries. Lowering prices of oil may adversely impact Iraq's economy which is at the frontline of the war against ISIS. Weakening of Iraq may hold larger geopolitical issues with regards to terrorism.

Considering the widespread influence the Middle-East has on world politics, any adverse impact on the security situation of these countries will have far-reaching consequences for many countries of the world.

Q5) Write a short note on the locational factors and production trends of edible oil industry in India.

Main Article: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-may-allow-export-of-premium-edible-oil-in-bulk-114120500024_1.html

Ans:

To improve India's prospect of economic development providing a conducive environment for doing business is a prerequisite condition. And India's low rank in ease of doing business report reveals the dismal condition of doing business in India.

Reasons for low ranking of India are

- Complex regulatory structure
- Inordinate delays in environmental clearance
- Bureaucratic delays in clearance of files
- Complex customs and excise clearance procedures
- Documentations at multiple stages
- Complex banking procedures for getting loans

To improve the current environment of doing business government had requested World Bank to send a team of experts for the same. Presently a team of experts of WB is in India and team will recommend required changes in legislation especially in areas of enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency. Team is meeting various stakeholders in Delhi and Mumbai and then will give final recommendation.

Moreover currently cabinet has cleared 14 amendments to Companies Act 2013 out of which two are specifically related to doing business parameters.

Government has taken right step to increase confidence of investors but still there is need to bring changes in mechanism of approval of projects and steps should also be taken to reduce unnecessary delays in bureaucratic approval for example time bound clearance from different departments should be ensured.

Q6) India currently ranks very low at 142 among 189 countries ranked in 'Ease of Doing Business' category. Examine why and explain the measures taken by the government to address this issue.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/world-bank-experts-to-suggest-reforms/article6665711.ece>

Ans:

The government's recent push for greater foreign investment in India through its 'Make in India' campaign will not hold any weight if India is not able to improve its performance on the 'Ease of Doing Business' list. India's present rank of 142 is lower than all of our neighbours except Afghanistan and Bangladesh, while China is ranked 96th.

The low rank can be partially due to many developing countries with lower economic capabilities like Mauritius, Lithuania, Thailand, UAE etc. going up the list into the top 50. Investors have complained about the bureaucratic hurdles in various activities such as in electric connections, registering property, paying taxes, cross-border trading and resolving insolvency. All these issues increase the time required for getting construction permits. Exiting a business is also subjected to numerous terms and conditions.

The government has tried to improve the scenario by suggesting overhaul of the archaic Labour laws, streamlining all environment-related acts into one Environmental (Management) Act, increasing the FDI cap in defence, insurance etc. and availing themselves of advice from experts in WB. The DIPP has also been charged with the task of identifying a list of issues from various ministries/departments which need to be addressed to improve our rankings.

The present government, with an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, has the capacity to pursue a pro-reform policy in the governance. Removing the barriers will be essential for India to emerge as a global manufacturing hub.

Q7) "The roots of the Carnatic and Hindustani styles of music go back to the *bhakti* tradition." Examine.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/chennai-music-festival-the-seasons-resonance/article6662321.ece>

Ans:

The Bhakti Movement was an important landmark in the cultural history of medieval India. The movement is closely related to Islamic Sufism, which appeared around the same time: both were based on the intense emotional attachment of a devotee towards his personal god. It shunned unnecessary ritual and artificial social boundaries. The Bhakti movement originated in ancient Tamil Nadu and began to spread to the north during the late medieval ages.

Bhakti resulted in a mass of devotional literature, music, and art that has enriched the world. This movement was responsible for many rites and rituals associated with the worship of God. For example, Kirtan at a Hindu Temple, Qawaali at a Dargah, and singing of Gurbani at a Gurdwara are all derived from the Bhakti movement. The movement gravitated around inspired bards, or poets, who spread the message through their verses. It also stimulated the development of regional languages.

The two main genres of India classical music are Carnatic Music and Hindustani music. The musical chanting of Samaveda is said to be the source of the secular and classical music. How and when they developed into two different streams is not clear. It was in the medieval age that the branching out became clear. Also the Bhakti movement had much influence upon them and many important musical concepts evolved in clear terms.

Hindustani music is believed to have originated due to Persian and Islamic influences in North India. But during the Bhakti movement songs using elements of speech, dance and drama, played a major role in spreading ideas in art and music. Composers are also known to have had a profound influence on the Bhakti movement through their marvelous works. Jayadeva, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Bhakta Narasimha and Meerabai are a few to name.

Carnatic music is a system of music commonly associated with the southern part of the India believed to have evolved from ancient Hindu traditions. It was substantially influenced by the bhakti movement which inspired the use of religious themes. In contrast to Hindustani music, the main emphasis in Carnatic music is on vocal music; most compositions are written to be sung, and even when played on instruments, they are meant to be performed in gayaki (singing) style.

The Bhakti movement still remains a unique example of the collective use of the structures and stylistic features in the art of music.

TOPIC: SECURITY & IR GS3

Q8) The contract between the United States government and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) – which manages the Domain Name System (DNS) under U.S. oversight – expires in 2015, but the USA is not interested in giving up its control on ICANN. Examine its implications and explain with reasons what should be India's position on this issue.

Main Article:<http://m.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/why-india-must-engage-with-icann/article6662319.ece/>

Ans:

The ICANN is nonprofit organization concerned with the management of Internet's global Domain Naming System (DNS). The ICANN's contract with USA is about to expire in 2015, The NSA spying scandal has put pressure on the US government to relinquish its unchallenged oversight of the ICANN to an inter-governmental agency. However, the US insistence on *multi-stakeholder body* consisting of big businesses and MNCs would hardly be reliable.

Flaws: ICANN is only responsible to US government and laws. Business companies of USA have benefited most from the current system. Newly proposed regime is also on the same line and it has broader implications on issues of capacity to regulate flow of information, protecting privacy and security of their citizens and to also in developing robust internet economies.

India's demands: The above is in contrast with demand of most of countries including India of setting up of an inter-governmental agency under UN umbrella for the same purpose. India's position is dictated by its desire of seeing the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) be handed to a global organization as well as its concern for the security of .in and .bharat domains.

Present stand: India's strategy of not engaging with ICANN issues may be counterproductive if a UN body to monitor ICANN's functioning is not established. India would then have to let the US renew its contract with ICANN, or have negligible stake in the multi-stakeholder entity.

Priority: To protect its own interests India and other countries need to demand more equitable approach on the matter. Thus India needs to change its present stand of not engaging in ICANN talks.

And India should proactively participate in Governmental Advisory Committee's negotiation on this issue. Most importantly voice of India cannot remain unheard because of its huge lucrative internet market.

India, one of the largest internet markets, should make use of this clout by engaging civil society and the government work together to finalize the agreement.

Q9) Critically examine the shortcomings of India's approach to disaster management, especially industrial disasters.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/managing-risks-avoiding-disasters/article6662316.ece>

Ans:

India has most of the steps necessary to collect information on disasters and employ techniques to mitigate them. The setting up of the NDMA and SDMA, the Tsunami Early Warning System, satellite coverage to mitigate cyclonic disasters, flood control by building dams etc are cases in point. However, there are serious shortcomings in this strategy.

Infrastructure building in India is heavily influenced by politics. Industries are generally the prerogative of few big businessmen and the influence they hold over governments. The top-down system of management currently being followed, instead of promoting democratization of project implementation, causes a lack of understanding of the local ecologies and adaptive processes among the experts.

Another serious issue is the lack of expertise. As was seen in the Bhopal Gas tragedy, there was lack of administrative expertise to respond to the disaster, lack of conceptual expertise to devise long-term rehabilitation strategies and troubleshoot problems, and lack of ethnographic expertise to gain understanding of the disaster and utilize this experience.

The recent push for rapid industrialization by the government will only increase chances of industrial hazards. The recent Fukushima-Daichii Disaster in Japan, the collapse of a textile mill in Bangladesh, the numerous oil spills in the past few years etc should be an eye-opener. Disaster management agencies should realize that mitigation cannot be carried out only by technical fixes, but also requires careful research and analysis of historical disasters. An agency which integrates all the insights from global researches may be immensely helpful in disaster prevention.

Q10). Write a short note on NASA's recently launched Orion space capsule.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/unmanned-nasa-spaceship-blasts-off-for-trial-run/article6665429.ece>

Ans:

The NASA's Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle (MPCV) is a spacecraft intended to carry a crew of up to four astronauts farther fly farther than any spacecraft made for astronauts have gone, about 5,800 km above the Earth's surface. Orion will serve as the exploration vehicle that will carry the crew to space, provide emergency abort capability, sustain the crew during the space travel, and provide safe re-entry from deep space return velocities.

The ship is designed eventually to take humans beyond the space station, to destinations such as the Moon and Mars.

Orion is reminiscent of the Apollo command ships that took men to the Moon in the 60s and 70s, only bigger and with cutting-edge systems. Its recent maiden, unmanned voyage mission is but one small step in a very long development programme.

In the future, Orion will launch on NASA's new heavy-lift rocket, the Space Launch System. More powerful than any rocket ever built, SLS will be capable of sending humans to deep space destinations such as an asteroid and eventually Mars. The agency hopes to send astronauts on an Orion mission through deep space to an asteroid and Mars in the 2030s.

The mission is also an important step for commercial space transportation.

Q11) Write a critical note on threats faced by the Amazon rainforest and indigenous tribes living in the region.

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/indigenous-people-in-peru-fighting-for-land-rights/article6662407.ece>

Ans:

Surviving more than 55 million years, amazon, the rain forest about twice the size of India lost almost 20% of its forest cover in mere last 50 years is a spine-chilling truth. Home to 10% of world's biodiversity and 15-16% of world's total river discharge, Amazon is losing its uniqueness and significance can be attributed to

1. Slash and burn agriculture practice for plantations
2. Avarice need of timber.
3. Corporate domination in planting soya , palm for its oil is the main reason.
4. Large scale deforestation for pulp extraction in paper industry.

Implications:-

Research reveals that our planet now has 22% of its original forest cover , if this pace of deforestation continues the amazon forest will be no more by 2100, which imposes a serious implication not only to south America but also to the entire earth. This will have the following implications

1. Loss of World's 10% habitat which is irreversible.
2. Unpredictable Climate change brings huge havoc such as drought, famine, epidemic..
3. Carbon emission will increase by 11% at a single shot which results in increased global temperature,
4. Recurring flood due to melting of glaciers.
5. Soil erosion and change of course of Amazon River changes geographic pattern suddenly.

Threats to tribes:

1. Tribes are exploited as slaves to work for corporate capitalist.
2. Killing of indigenous people for land grabbing by MNCs.
3. Right to live and livelihood is denied for tribes.

4. Deprived of Native land by legal sanctions.

It is too late that we human forget to conserve our mother nature, at least now we should succeed through successive convention on climate change under Environment Conservation by UN, to take up and fulfil Zero Deforestation Challenge.

Q12) In the light of ongoing debate about introduction of native languages in higher education and cuts made in budgetary allocation to education sector, critically examine the rationale behind and the importance of proposed 12th Plan programme to revitalise Indian language resources in higher education

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/beyond-the-language-tussle/article6665681.ece>

Ans:

Rationale of 12th plan was to revive Indian language resources in higher education to have more intellectual resources and bring quality education. Several loopholes in implementation and lack of analysis did not however resulted into practicable knowledge growth of students.

Firstly, mandatory study in local language deprived students from plenty of resources which lead to gap in understanding and relating local and global words. A big praise for judiciary directing to not make mother tongue compulsory in studying.

Secondly, lack of clarity in education curriculum. The recent direction by cbse to replace German with Sanskrit in kv schools is the assumption that Sanskrit will give vast resources on Indian culture. Assumption is far from true, as history shows the present languages are result of many languages including Persian, Arabic, Tamil, and Sanskrit.

This unprecedented directives also make students more vulnerable, and less enthusiastic. The new govt. decision has planned to cut investing in 12th plan proposed is being seen as reforming education system.

However, intangible outcomes of investing in human resource should be taken care of for advancement of country. Devising a robust educational system is needed in a globalised world to make student develop thinking ability to relate local or any language with other global languages.

Q14). " Unlike subsidies or public works, the basic income transfers have the potential to be transformative." In the light of growing demand for introduction of cash benefit transfers to the poor, examine the statement

Main Article: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/cash-transfers-can-work-better-than-subsidies/article6665676.ece>

Ans:

The percentage of GDP which the Indian government spends on subsidies is far less than the amount spent on welfare activities like education, health, or infrastructure. Subsidies are generally wasteful due to the losses incurred by corruption and leakage, and poor targeting. Basic income transfer has grown in importance as a viable alternative to subsidies.

According to various surveys, direct income transfer encourages many rural people to open bank accounts, thus helping in the drive for greater financial inclusion. The money is effectively used by the beneficiaries to invest in small businesses or save, reducing their dependence on money-lenders. Villagers trying to augment their income by making investments inject capital into the village economy and stimulate its growth. Greater income has resulted in improvements in child nutrition, schooling attendance and performance, health, sanitation and housing. It has also caused equitable development among the various sections of society. Hence, cash transfers cannot be simply considered in monetary terms as it is creating capital and causing social upliftment as well.

Subsidies are generally wasteful, and they do not promote the entrepreneurial spirit of people. Also, the amount spent in cash transfers will be much lesser than in subsidies to bring about the same results. The emancipatory of income transfers can not only bring about sustainable welfare and growth in villages but also induce more positive social outcomes than selective schemes.

Q15). "Muslims have traced a recent trajectory they can't decipher. Their states have become unstable after seeking to transition from authoritarianism to democracy." In the light of Arab Spring and its outcomes, critically comment on the statement.

Main Article: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-illusion-of-spring/99/>

Ans:

The wave of protests and struggle which swept through the Arab world four years ago was widely considered as the movement which would finally bring democracy to the Arab countries. However, only a few countries have been successful.

The movement began in Tunisia, and after a few hiccups it has been able to approve a new constitution and hold two parliamentary elections without regressing into anarchy. In Egypt, longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak was ousted and Mohammed Morsi came to power. However, his rule lasted only for a year and he was overthrown by the military chief, Abdel el-Sisi. Libya and Yemen saw the end of their long standing dictators, Muammar Gaddafi and Abdullah Saleh respectively. However, both countries are now in chaos and headed by weak and divisive central authorities. Syria has been besieged by civil war. However, there is no sign of President Assad's rule ending in the near future. The Gulf-States have largely been untouched, mainly due to their promise of \$160 billion in welfare spending.

Turkey's desire to lead the Muslim world has caused it to support secessionist factions and rebels in countries like Tunisia and Syria. The Gulf States like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have also tried to increase their influence by propping up Islamic jihadists all over the region, leading to clashes between them and secular governments and moderate Muslims. This conflict of interest between the oil monarchies of the gulf and the other Arab countries has been the greatest hindrance to the democratization process in the region.

TOPIC: SECURITY GS3

Q16) In the light of recent attack on CRPF personnel by Maoists, critically examine the lacunae in fight against left wing extremism and suggest what needs to be done by the government to tackle the problem effectively.

Main Article: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/old-new-war/99/>

Ans:

The Naxal movement is no longer the ideological movement aimed at emancipation of the poor but has turned few into perpetrators of violence at the direction of few. The major lacunae to fight Left wing extremism are:

Lack of Coordination:

Majority Maoists operate as interstate networks and evade police force by temporary move to another state due to lack of understanding and co-operation between states. The interstate co-ordination should be ensured by the center.

Intelligence Failures: The intelligence setups need improvement and there is a need to bring co-ordination between intelligence agencies at the center and states and interstate agencies. The intelligence setup needs to be revamped for the present needs.

Lack of specialized training: The police are not equipped technologically and ill trained for Guerrilla tactics of Naxal. The prerequisite arms and resources to fight well-armed Naxal is also absent in majority police stations. Development of specially trained police force should be a priority.

Lack of Infrastructural development: The reason Naxal root in underdeveloped areas is the lack of development. The government should immediately prioritize developments of roads, hospitals, communications, and schools to ensure peoples participation in development.

Slow Reform: The Naxal exploit the sentiment of the people of undeveloped areas and induct them so there is an immediate need to bring land reforms and physical infrastructure very quickly to pave way for other developmental activities and win confidence of people.

Slow Rehabilitation: Lack of clear policy for rehabilitation of Maoists and states lacking in a clear policy hinders their return into mainstream. Their rehabilitation will ensure the Naxal groups will rethink taking up arms again.

Absence of Holistic approach: Political security and development will change the public perception public perception and it will be the foundation towards bringing change.

The Maoist threat grew from 15 states to 200 states due to the fact that the central and state government underestimated the threat during the spread and even now.

The development along with willing political and administrative organs will counter Maoist propaganda will usher change.

Q18). What were the original objectives of the Planning Commission when it was set-up? In the light of recent move to replace the body, examine the shortcomings of Planning Commission and how these can help in setting up a new body.

Main Article: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/errors-of-commission-3/99/>

Ans:

Following were the original objectives of the Planning Commission when it was set-up:

It was charged with the responsibility of making an assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the country and investigating the possibilities of augmenting deficient resources; formulating a plan for the most effective and balanced utilisation of resources; determining priorities and defining stages in which the plan would be implemented and proposing the allocation of resources; indicating which factors tend to retard economic development and determining the conditions needed for execution of the plan; appraising the progress achieved in execution and recommending appropriate adjustments. The commission was to be “an organisation free from the burden of the day-to-day administration, but in constant touch with the government at the highest policy level”. It was to make recommendations to the cabinet and was expected to act in close understanding and consultation with the Central ministries and state governments.

Shortcomings of Planning Commission:

1. While the commission engaged in wide consultations for the formulation of the five-year plans, the way in which the approach document and draft plan were placed before the National Development Council was not rigorous enough.
2. The formulation of the annual plan of ministries would also entail much dialogue. Within the overall ceiling, ministry proposals would be chiselled, pruned and sometimes enhanced.
3. The formulation of the annual plans of the states also required a 60 to 80-day cycle. Two elements of this exercise- the announcement of the rather tiny special plan assistance/ special Central assistance, which would matter more to the smaller states, and the fact that, in many cases, the plan discussions would take place after the state budget has been introduced- lent a certain piquancy to the proceedings.
4. In 1972, the project management and appraisal division (PAMD) in the commission, was set up to institutionalise project appraisals and undertake techno-economic assessments of all plan projects and schemes. The PAMD, whose approval would be required for all proposals exceeding Rs 50 crore, acquired huge clout.

The new commission would be better off without these add-ons, so that it can do its own work. The Planning Commission certainly championed the cause of ministries and the poorer states. But its sitting in judgement over schemes and projects, its assumption of superior wisdom and power without accountability turned it into a bugbear. In the final analysis, it diluted the focus on its core activity.

