

GOVERNANCE

Indian Media's Role During Pandemic

Recently, the Union Information and Broadcasting Minister applauded the Indian media for its role during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Points

- At the **17th Asia Media Summit**, via video conferencing, the I&B Minister said that **Indian media ensured** that COVID awareness messages, important government guidelines and free consultations with doctors reached everyone in the country.
- **Theme:** The theme of the Asia Media Summit this year is '**Future Forward, Reimagining Media**'
- **Doordarshan and All India Radio** significantly delivered on their mandate of public service was proved by their role in setting the trend through prompt coverage, ground reports and organising programmes on public health.
- **Fake news:** Unverified claims and fake content circulating in the media had created an atmosphere of extreme fear amongst the people. Although, the **Press Information Bureau's Fact Check Unit** strongly fought against the menace of fake news and misinformation on a real time basis.

Importance of Media

- **Awareness:** During COVID, the Indian media played a very important role in educating the people about the benefit of being vaccinated against corona virus.
 - One of the foremost challenges was **vaccine hesitancy**. That was broken by the media through right messages and education.
- **Imparting Education:** The young generation is becoming more aware of the sacrifices that our freedom fighters made for Independence.
- **Tool of empowerment:** knowledge empowers people to take best decisions.
- **Accessibility and Internet growth:** The growth of the Internet through affordable mobile devices has re-ignited the industry. **5G technology** would further enhance user experience, with increase in the speed of delivery and improvement in the quality of media content.
- **Preservation connects generation:** It is the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to **prioritise preservation and promotion** of India's rich cultural heritage.
 - To fulfill that vision the Government has announced the World's largest film restoration project under the National Film Heritage Mission.
 - As part of this drive, more than 2200 movies **across languages and genres** will be restored to their former glory
 - The new generations should know, acknowledge and imbibe the values that our forefathers cherished.
- **Soft Power:** Indian cinema ruled the hearts of millions across the world and had **created an identity for India**. This was evident in the way India's films got tremendous applause from film lovers in the festival.
 - Churning out 3000 releases, India produces the highest number of films every year.

Challenges

- **Authenticity of content** would always remain at the core, whatever be the technological progress. And with rising fake news it is becoming tougher to discriminate fake news from real ones.
- There are cases seen which **lack accountability** to the public and their ethical and professional standards are questionable.
- **Media independence** is under the radar of questions as it is influenced by the ruling Governments, most of the time.
- The **financial viability** of media houses makes them more prone to seeking favours from Governments.
- **Section 124a of IPC** under which sedition is punishable by life imprisonment endangers the freedom of journalists. This leads to fear among journalists to work freely.

Way Ahead

- A very positive role is played by the media in the world.
- It has immense ability to shape the right public perceptions and perspectives as an effective tool of empowerment.

- Media independence can be guaranteed if media organisations are financially viable, free from intervention of media owners and the state, and operate in a competitive environment.
- Efforts to help the media should be directed toward: the protection of press rights, enhancing media accountability, building media capacity and democratising media access.

PRELIMS FACTS

1. Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

- The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) was established in August 1977 under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- It is a unique regional inter-governmental organisation servicing countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media development.
- It is hosted by the Government of Malaysia and the secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur.
- The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.
- Full membership of the AIBD is confined to sovereign states and they are invited to designate the broadcasting authority of the country to be the beneficiary.
- The AIBD currently has 26 Full Members (countries), represented by 43 organisations, and 50 Affiliate Members (organisations) with a total membership of 93 representing 46 countries and regions and over 50 partners in Asia, Pacific, Europe, Africa, Arab States and North America.

2. Astra Mark-1 air-to-air missile: features, strategic importance

The ministry of Defence recently has signed a contract with the Hyderabad-based public-sector Bharat Dynamics Ltd(BDL)for supply of the Astra Mark-1 missile, at a cost of Rs 2,971 crore, for deployment on fighter jets of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy. The Astra Mk-1is a beyond visual range (BVR),air-to air missile (AAM).

DEVELOPMENT:

- The missile has been designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for deployment on fighter jets such as Sukhoi-30MKI and Tejas of the IAF and Mig-29K of the Navy. Several successful tests have been conducted since 2017 from Sukhoi-30MKIs.
- The Astra project was officially launched in the early 2000s,and the development of the Mk-1version was complete around 2017. More than 50 private and public industries, including the IAF and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL),have contributed in building the Astra systems. BVM missiles are capable of engaging beyond the range of 20 nautical miles (37 km). TheAstraMk-1hasa range of around 110km.TheMk-2withrangeover150km is under development while the Mk-3with a longer range is being envisaged. One more version of Astra, with a range smaller thanMk-1's,too is underdevelopment.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE:

- AAMs with BVR capability provide large stand-off ranges to aircraft so that they can neutralise adversary airborne assets without exposing themselves to adversary air defence measures. Stand-off range means the missile is launched at a distance far enough to allow the attacking side to evade defensive fire from the target.
- Astra is technologically and economically superior to many imported missile systems. The missile can travel at speeds more than four times that of sound and can reach a maximum altitude of 20km. The missile is integrated on the Sukhoi 30 MKI and will be integrated with other fighter air craft in a phased manner, including Tejas. The Navy will integrate it on MiG29Kfighter aircraft on its aircraft carriers.

THE CONTRACT:

- The purchase will be under the Buy (Indian-IDDm) category of defence acquisition—or procurement from an Indian vendor of defence products that have been “indigenously designed, developed and manufactured” with a minimum of 50 per cent indigenous content(on the basis of cost). Until now ,the technology to manufacture missiles of this class indigenously was not available. The project will create opportunities for several MSMEs in aerospace technology for at least 25 years.

3. **Param Ananta Supercomputer**

- Recently, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and IIT Gandhinagar have unveiled India's latest supercomputer called 'Param Ananta'.

About Param Ananta Supercomputer

- This development is in line with phase two of the central government's National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) which is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- Computing power: 838 teraflops computing power capacity.
 - The high power supercomputer can process 838 lakh crore calculations per second.
- Indigenously developed: Manufactured and assembled under 'Make in India'.
- Ranking: The supercomputer will rank behind C-DAC's Param Siddhi-AI, which was the 102nd most powerful supercomputer in the world with peak performance capability of 3.3 petaflops.

Applications

- Help in Research and development activities.
- Its use will include artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and data science, computational fluid dynamics (CFD), bio-engineering for genome sequencing and DNA studies, computational biology and bioinformatics used in prediction and detection of gene networks.
- It can help atomic and molecular sciences to comprehend the binding of drugs to a particular protein.
- Multiple applications from various scientific domains such as Weather and Climate, Bioinformatics etc

DAILY ANSWER WRITING

Q. Analyze the importance of Development Anti –Satellites weapons for strategic Military purposes. Will India's anti satellite weapon test spark an arms race in Space ?

Introduction

India successfully conducted its first Anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon test as a part of 'Mission Shakti' in Low Earth Orbit (LEO). Anti-satellite weapons are space weapons designed to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic military purposes. The Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) Ballistic Missile Defence interceptor was used in India's ASAT test. The test places India in a select group of countries alongside the US, Russia and China with demonstrated anti-satellite capability.

The development of ASAT weapon is important for strategic military purposes because:

- The ASAT weapon test provides credible deterrence against threats to India's growing space-based assets from long range missiles.
- ASAT can be used to detect, target and destroy communication or military satellites of enemy countries during the time of war.
- The test also contributed to India's ability to undertake ballistic missile defence. An ASAT test against a LEO-based satellite demonstrates the ability to intercept longer-range missiles, which fly faster and higher than short-range tactical missiles that generally fly within Earth's atmosphere.
- Absence of such weapons would compromise effective command and control and eliminate space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, thus enabling hostile neighbours like China to crippling India's military capabilities.
- The test will provide new strengths to India's security and economic development and social infrastructure.
- The possibility of ASAT triggering an arms race:**
- The test has sparked apprehensions that weaponization of space is forthcoming and it would trigger a chain-reaction whereby other countries will follow in India's footsteps leading to militarization or weaponization of space by deploying their respective arms in space. Some of these technologies are not prohibitively expensive or too technologically advanced for 'rogue states' like North Korea to aspire for. Also, other states like Pakistan which are in perpetual quest for strategic parity with their neighbours may try to emulate such capabilities.
- However, concerns for space arms race instigated by India's ASAT test are largely misplaced. Countries of the world are aware that space could be a potential zone of conflict in the upcoming future and are preparing themselves for such eventualities. For example– France and the United States are building space forces. India's ASAT was capacity demonstration exercise which should be seen in the light of changing security dynamics of the world.

- India is a party to many major international treaties related to outer space including The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and none of these were violated during the ASAT testing. India also supports UNGA resolution 69/32 on No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) in the Conference on Disarmament.

Conclusion

Thus, though it is comparatively less difficult to examine an issue in depth by a committee of 30 than by an assembly of 700, the issues faced by these Committees limits their scope.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Consider the following statements about Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)
 1. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is one of the founding organisation of AIBD institute.
 2. UNESCO is a voting member of the General Conference of the institute.
 3. The institute is hosted by the Government of Malaysia.
 4. Full membership of the AIBD is confined to sovereign states only.

Which of the above statement/s is /are correct

- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2,3 and 4 only
 - c) **1,3,4 only**
 - d) 3 and 4 only
2. With regards to Param Ananta Supercomputer which of the following statement is not correct
 - a) Param Ananta is capable of offering peak performance of 838 teraflops.
 - b) **This facility is established under Phase 1 of the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).**
 - c) It is a joint initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Department of Science and Technology (DST)
 - d) Param Ananta system is based on Direct Contact Liquid Cooling technology to obtain a high power usage effectiveness and thereby reducing the operational cost.

3. Consider the following statement in respect of Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards:

1. Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are titles under Article 18 (1) of Constitution Of India
2. Padma Award which were instituted in year 1954, were suspended only once
3. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a minimum of five in a particular year

Which of the above statements are not correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 1 and 3 only
 - d) **1,2 and 3**
4. Mycorrhizal biotechnology has been used in rehabilitating degraded sites because mycorrhiza enables the plants to
 1. Resist drought and increase absorptive area
 2. Tolerate extremes of PH
 3. Resist disease infection

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 1 and 3 only
 - d) **1,2 and 3 only**
5. Consider the following statements with reference to citizenship (amendment) act 2019
 1. The amendment act makes foreign migrants of six religious community from Bangladesh ,Bhutan ,Pakistan .
 2. The act does not apply to 6th schedule states of the constitution
 Select the correct statement/s using the codes given below
 - a) 1 only
 - b) **2 only**
 - c) Both
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
 6. Consider the following statement with reference to Kaavi Art often in news
 1. The Kaavi form of painting was introduced by the Portuguese

2. Blue is the only colour used in kaavi art
 3. mostly found in Goa and coastal parts of Maharashtra
- choose the correct statement /s
- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) **1 and 3 only**
 - d) All of the above
7. Consider the following statements regarding the pharmaceutical sector of India
1. India's pharmaceutical industry is third largest in the world in terms of volume and value.
 2. Drug formulations and biologicals are the second largest exported commodity in the Merchandise exports.
 3. India's exports in pharmaceuticals have doubled in the past 10 years
 4. China is now the largest export destination for Indian exports followed by USA.
- Which of the above statement/s given is/are correct?
- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) **2 and 3 only**
 - c) 1 and 4 only
 - d) 2 and 4 only
8. Which of the following statements regarding UIDAI is/are incorrect?
1. UIDAI is a non – statutory body and is an attached office of NITI Aayog
 2. It aims to empower residents of India with a unique identity and a digital platform to authenticate anytime, anywhere.
 3. Prime Minister is the CEO of the UIDAI
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
 - b) **1 and 3 only**
 - c) None is correct
 - d) 2 and 3 only
9. Consider the following statements
1. The GDP calculates national income by adding up all expenditures in the economy.
 2. The GVA calculates the national income from the supply side by looking at the value added in each sector of the economy
- Choose the correct statement using the codes given below
- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. Consider the following statement with regards to Astra Mark 1 missile
1. The Astra Mk-1 is a beyond visual range (BVR) air-to air missile (AAM)
 2. It was developed under Astra project launched in 2017.
- Select the correct statements using the codes given below
- a) **1 only**
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2