

ECONOMICS❖ **Old Pension Scheme**

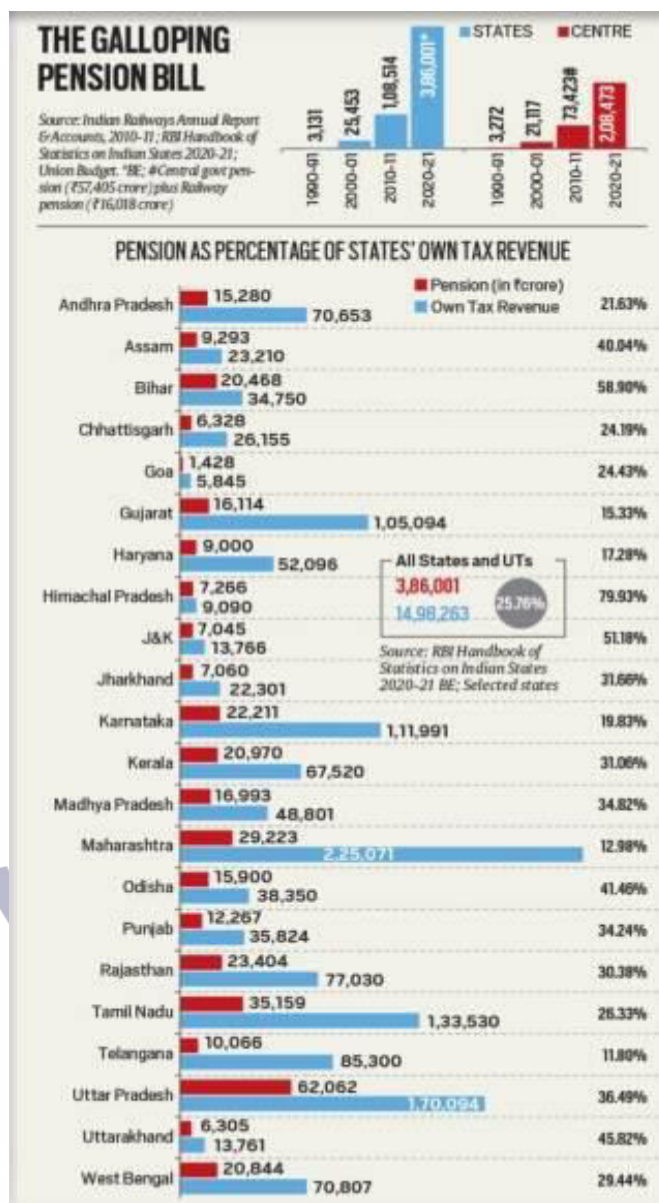
❖ **CONTEXT:** Congress and AAP are promising to switch to the Old Pension Scheme. Congress has already reverted to the Old Pension Scheme in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, and AAP has said it would do the same in Punjab.

➤ **What was the Old Pension Scheme?**

- Pension to government employees at the Centre as well as states was fixed at 50 per cent of the last drawn basic pay. The attraction of the Old Pension Scheme or 'OPS' — called so since it existed before a new pension system came into effect for those joining government service from January 1, 2004 — lay in its promise of an assured or 'defined' benefit to the retiree. It was hence described as a 'Defined Benefit Scheme'.
- To illustrate, if a government employee's basic monthly salary at the time of retirement was Rs 10,000, she would be assured of a pension of Rs 5,000. Also, like the salaries of government employees, the monthly payouts of pensioners also increased with hikes in dearness allowance or DA announced by the government for serving employees.
- DA — calculated as a percentage of the basic salary — is a kind of adjustment the government offers its employees and pensioners to make up for the steady increase in the cost of living. DA hikes are announced twice a year, generally in January and July. A 4 per cent DA hike would mean that a retiree with a pension of Rs 5,000 a month would see her monthly income rise to Rs 5,200 a month.
- As on date, the minimum pension paid by the government is Rs 9,000 a month, and the maximum is Rs 62,500 (50 per cent of the highest pay in the Central government, which is Rs 1,25,000 a month).

➤ **What were the concerns with the OPS?**

- The main problem was that the pension liability remained unfunded — that is, there was no corpus specifically for pension, which would grow continuously and could be dipped into for payments.
 - ✓ The Government of India budget provided for pensions every year; there was no clear plan on how to pay year after year in the future.
 - ✓ The government estimated payments to retirees ahead of the Budget every year, and the present generation of taxpayers paid for all pensioners as on date.
 - ✓ The 'pay-as-you-go' scheme created inter-generational equity issues — meaning the present generation had to bear the continuously rising burden of pensioners.
- The OPS was also unsustainable.
 - ✓ For one, pension liabilities would keep climbing since pensioners' benefits increased every year; like salaries of existing employees, pensioners gained from indexation, or what is called 'dearness relief' (the same as dearness allowance for existing employees).
 - ✓ And two, better health facilities would increase life expectancy, and increased longevity would mean extended payouts.
- Over the last three decades, pension liabilities for the Centre and states have jumped manifold. In 1990-91, the Centre's pension bill was Rs 3,272 crore, and the outgo for all states put together was Rs 3,131 crore. By 2020-21, the Centre's bill had jumped 58 times to Rs 1,90,886 crore; for states, it had shot up 125 times to Rs 3,86,001 crore.



In 30 years, the cumulative pension bill of states has jumped to Rs 3,86,001 crore in 2020-21 from Rs 3,131 crore in 1990-91.

➤ **What was planned to address this situation?**

- In 1998, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment commissioned a report for an Old Age Social and Income Security (OASIS) project.
- An expert committee under S A Dave, a former chairman of SEBI and Unit Trust of India, submitted the report in January 2000.
- The OASIS project was not meant to reform the government pension system — its primary objective was targeted at unorganised sector workers who had no old age income security.
- Taking the 1991 Census numbers, the committee noted that just 3.4 crore people, or less than 11 per cent of the estimated total working population of 31.4 crore, had some post-retirement income security — this could be government pension, Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), or the Employee Pension Scheme (EPS). The rest of the workforce had no means of post-retirement economic security.
- The OASIS report recommended individuals could invest in three types of funds — safe (allowing up to 10 per cent investment in equity), balanced (up to 30 per cent in equity), and growth (up to 50 per cent in equity) — to be floated by six fund managers. The balance would be invested in corporate bonds or government securities. Individuals would have unique retirement accounts, and would be required to invest at least Rs 500 a year.
- Post retirement, at least Rs 2 lakh from the retirement account would be used to purchase an annuity. (An annuity provider invests the amount and provides a fixed monthly income — which was Rs 1,500 when the report was prepared — for the remainder of the individual's life.)

- A year-and-a-half after the Project OASIS report was submitted, the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions set up a high-level expert group (HLEG) under B K Bhattacharya, a former chief secretary of Karnataka, to look into the situation for government employees.
- ✓ The HLEG suggested a hybrid defined benefit/ defined contribution scheme for government employees. In the first tier, it recommended a 10 per cent contribution by the employer and the employee. The accumulated funds would be used to pay pension in annuity form.
- ✓ In the second tier, no limit was specified for the employee, but the employer's contribution would be matching but limited to 5 per cent. Accumulated funds could be withdrawn in lumpsum or converted into annuity. These incomes would be tax exempt.
- ✓ The report was submitted on February 22, 2002, but it did not find favour with the government.
- **What was the origin of the New Pension Scheme?**
- The New Pension System proposed by the Project OASIS report became the basis for pension reforms — and what was originally conceived for unorganised sector workers, was adopted by the government for its own employees.
- The New Pension Scheme (NPS) for Central government employees was notified on December 22, 2003. Unlike some other countries, the NPS was for prospective employees — it was made mandatory for all new recruits joining government service from January 1, 2004.
- The defined contribution comprised 10 per cent of the basic salary and dearness allowance by the employee and a matching contribution by the government — this was Tier 1, with contributions being mandatory.
- In January 2019, the government increased its contribution to 14 per cent of the basic salary and dearness allowance.
- Individuals can choose from a range of schemes from low risk to high risk, and pension fund managers promoted by public sector banks and financial institutions, as well as private companies.
- Schemes under the NPS are offered by nine pension fund managers — sponsored by SBI, LIC, UTI, HDFC, ICICI, Kotak Mahindra, Adita Birla, Tata, and Max.
- The risk profiles of various schemes offered by these players vary from 'low' to 'very high'. The 10-year return for the NPS Scheme-Central Government floated by SBI, LIC, and UTI stood at 9.22 per cent; the 5-year return at 7.99 per cent, and the 1-year return at 2.34 per cent. Returns on high-risk schemes could be as high as 15 per cent.
- Over the last eight years, the NPS has built a robust subscriber base, and its assets under management have increased. As on October 31, 2022, the Central government had 23,32,774 subscribers, and states had 58,99,162 subscribers.
- The corporate sector had 15,92,134 subscribers, and the unorganized sector 25,45,771.
- There were 41,77,978 subscribers under the NPS Swavalamban scheme. The total assets under management of all these subscribers stood at Rs 7,94,870 crore as on October 31, 2022.
- **What view did the UPA government take?**
- It was the NDA government under A B Vajpayee that took up the pension reform.
- The NPS became effective for new recruits in government from January 1, 2004, and the new government led by the Congress that came to power that year bought into the reform fully.
- On March 21, 2005, the UPA government introduced a Bill in Lok Sabha to give statutory backing to the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority of India, the regulator for the NPS.
- The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance chaired by the BJP's B C Khanduri.
- The committee's July 2005 report showed the new government had rooted for the defined contribution feature of the NPS.
- Less than two years later, to get states on board for pushing through pension reforms, then Prime Minister and then Finance Minister P Chidambaram called a meeting of Chief Ministers and dwelt at length on the implications of pension on government finances, and exhorted them to allow accumulated funds in the public account to be invested in a pattern similar to that of non-government provident funds.
- **Why is the OPS both bad economics and bad politics?**
- In 30 years, the cumulative pension bill of states has jumped to Rs 3,86,001 crore in 2020-21 from Rs 3,131 crore in 1990-91. Overall, pension payments by states eat away a quarter of their own tax revenues.
- For some states, it is much higher. For Himachal, it is almost 80 per cent (pensions as a percentage of the state's own tax revenues); for Punjab it is almost 35 per cent; for Chhattisgarh 24 per cent; and for Rajasthan 30 per cent.
- If wages and salaries of state government employees are added to this bill, states are left with hardly anything from their own tax receipts. Funding a small number of former government employees by utilising a chunk of taxpayers' money cannot be good politics.
- There is also the larger issue of inter-generational equity. Today's taxpayers paying for the ever-increasing pensions of retirees, with Pay Commission awards almost taking the pension of old retirees to current levels, means the pension of someone who retired in 1995 may well be the same as that for someone who retires in 2025.

- As it is, the current generation of taxpayers are not only footing the pension bill of those who joined government service before 2004, they are also contributing to the 10 per cent contribution the state governments have been making for those who joined from January 1, 2004.
- After having backed pension reforms piloted by the NDA, Congress-led governments in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are switching to the Old Pension Scheme. The party has promised to revert to OPS in Himachal and Gujarat too.
- This does bring state governments some short-term gains: they save money since they will not have to put the 10 per cent matching contribution towards employee pension funds. For employees too, it will result in higher take-home salaries, since they too will not set aside 10 per cent of their basic pay and dearness allowance towards pension funds.
- But while the party has caved in to employee demands — even if they account for a small percentage of the country's workforce and are better taken care of than many others — the remedy is worse than the problem faced by some government employees, who are concerned their pension may not be the same as 50 per cent of their last salary drawn (as in the OPS).
- Contrast this with the bulk of the workforce which has no old age income security, but which also does not have much electoral salience.

PRELIMS

1. Patan Patola

❖ **CONTEXT: At the G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted traditional artworks from Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh to world leaders.**

- According to a PTI report, PM Modi presented US President Joe Biden with Kangra miniature paintings; UK PM Rishi Sunak with 'Mata Ni Pachedi', a handmade Gujarat textile offered in temples; 'Pithora', a tribal folk art from Chhota Udaipur, to Australian leader Anthony Albanese; agate bowls from Kutch to the leaders of France, Germany and Singapore; and a 'Patan Patola' scarf to his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni.

➤ **What is Patan Patola**

- The ancient art of double ikat or Patola woven in pure silk dates back to the 11th century.
- The Patola fabrics bear an equal intensity of colours and design on both sides.
- This peculiar quality has its origins in an intricate and difficult technique of dyeing or knot dyeing, known as 'bandhani', on the warp and weft separately before weaving.
- One of the major practitioners of the dwindling art form is the Salvi family from North Gujarat.

➤ **The Salvis**

- The last surviving family into Patola weaving is the Salvi family in Patan. From the oldest to the youngest, the entire nine member-family of five men and four women is engaged with this art form.
- The Salvi family shared that before World War II, Indonesia was the major buyer of Patolas.
- Legend has it that King Kumarpal of the Solanki dynasty invited some 700 families of Patola weavers from Jalna (Maharashtra) to settle in Patan in North Gujarat, and the Salvis are among them. The family has also been honoured with several national awards.

- Patola is woven on primitive hand-operated harness looms made out of rosewood and bamboo strips. The loom lies on a slant.

- The other commonly worn Patola is the Rajkot Patola, woven on a flat loom.
- The product designs, are based on traditional motifs called "bhat", which include "narikunj", "paan", "phulwadi", "rasbhat", flowers, animals birds, human figures, etc.
- The Salvi family said that in 1342 AD, the traveller Ibn Batuta had carried patolas as gifts to many kings. They were amply used in the 17th and 18th centuries as precious gift items.

➤ **Price**

- While possessing and wearing a Patola is considered a matter of pride, the fabric has largely remained inaccessible to common people because of its high price.
- The base price of a Patola saree in the Patan weave starts from Rs 1.5 lakh up and can go up to Rs 6 lakh. A typical 46-inch dupatta or scarf sells in the range of Rs 80,000, depending on the intricacy of the design.
- The Rajkot Patola saree starts at Rs 70,000 and goes up to Rs 1.25 lakh. The main difference here is that while the Rajkot Patola uses chemical dyes, Patan uses vegetable dyes. A Rajkot Patola weighs over 600 grams, while a Patola from Patan would weigh under 500 grams.
- Another difference is that the motifs in Patan Patolas are sharp, while the Rajkot ones are hazy.
- Ikat weaves are also found in Odisha's famous Sambalpuri sarees, which, unlike Patola, are woven in cotton yarn too, as is the Pochampally saree from Andhra Pradesh.

2. Artemis 1 heads to the Moon

❖ **CONTEXT: NASA's giant Moon rocket lifted off on its debut flight at 1.47 am EST (12.17 pm IST) on November 16 2022, heralding an exciting new phase of deep space exploration a half century after the six Apollo human Moon landings between 1969 and 1972.**

- The Orion space capsule that sits atop the 32-storey Space Launch System (SLS) vehicle will complete a 25-day lunar Orbiter mission before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean on December 11.

- The liftoff came after two scheduled launches on August 29 and September 3 were scrubbed following the detection of technical issues during the countdown.
 - The mission, known as Artemis 1, is unmanned, but headed to the Moon on board Orion are three dummies that mimic astronauts — with the intention of carrying out tests ahead of future manned missions to the Moon and beyond.
 - **But humans went to the Moon 50 years ago, so what's new?**
 - Although the objective is to ensure the return of humans to the Moon, the Artemis missions — named after Apollo's mythological twin sister — are going to be qualitatively very different from the Apollo missions of 50 years ago.
 - The Moon landings of the 1960s and 1970s were guided by Cold War geo-political considerations, and the desire of the United States to go one up on the Soviet Union — which had scored by launching the first satellite, Sputnik, and the first spacecraft, Luna 2, to crash on to the lunar surface, and sending the first man to space, cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.
 - So President John F Kennedy made a public announcement in 1961 that the US would put a man on the Moon before the decade was out. But the technology ecosystem wasn't fully ready yet to fully realise the potential of that monumental scientific breakthrough — and the astronauts who landed on the Moon could do little more than bring back samples to Earth for investigations.
 - **Where is the current status of human space exploration?**
 - Since the Apollo missions of 50 years ago, there has been massive progress in space exploration. Spacecraft have travelled beyond the solar system, and exploratory missions have probed Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.
 - More than 500 astronauts have travelled to space and back, and permanent space labs like the International Space Station (ISS) and China's Tiangong space station have been set up.
 - However, there are several unfulfilled promises — including the possibility of landing, and living, on other planets, and perhaps encountering alien life forms in deep space. It is these promises that the new age of space exploration seeks to fulfill.
 - **And what will Artemis do to fulfill those promises?**
 - Artemis 1 has fairly humble mission objectives — it is technically only a lunar Orbiter mission with no astronauts on board — it is a stepping stone to much greater things.
 - It is the first in a series of missions that are planned to not only take humans back to the Moon, but to also explore the possibilities of extended stay there, and to investigate the potential to use the Moon as a launch pad for deep space explorations.
 - The Artemis missions will build on the existing achievements of space technologies over the past few decades, and lay the foundations for more complex and ambitious missions in the future.
 - It will work towards extracting the resources found on the Moon, build from the materials available there, and harness hydrogen or helium as energy source.
 - Not all of this will happen with the first mission itself, but these things are distinctly possible now, making human landings on the Moon much more meaningful than earlier.
 - **What is the Artemis 1 mission carrying to the Moon?**
 - It is carrying several payloads in the form of small satellites called CubeSats, each of which is equipped with instruments meant for specific investigations and experiments. The focus of these investigations is to explore long-term stays of human beings in space, and on the Moon.
 - One CubeSat will search for water in all its forms; another will map the availability of hydrogen that can be utilised as a source of energy.
 - Then there are biology experiments, investigating the behaviour of small organisms like fungi and algae in outer space, and the effect of radiation, especially the reaction on their genes.
 - The Orion spacecraft is specifically designed to carry astronauts into deep space on future missions.
 - NASA hopes to establish a base on the Moon, and to send astronauts to Mars by the late 2030s or early 2040s. The three dummy 'passengers' are mannequins made of material that mimic human bones, skin, and soft tissue. These are equipped with a host of sensors to record the various impacts of deep-space atmosphere on the human body.
 - **What about the rocket itself?**
 - The SLS rocket is the most powerful ever built, more powerful than the Saturn V rockets that had taken the Apollo missions to the Moon.
 - The 98-metre-tall vehicle, weighing 2,500 tonnes, can help the Orion spacecraft achieve speeds of over 36,000 km per hour, and take it directly to the Moon, which is 1,000 times farther than the International Space Station that sees a regular traffic of astronauts.
- The planned duration of the Artemis 1 mission is 25 days, 11 hours, and 36 minutes. The Orion capsule will travel a total distance of 1.3 million miles, re-entering the Earth's atmosphere at 24,500 mph and splashing down on December 11
- 3. Malabar exercise**
- ❖ **Context: The 26th edition of the multinational maritime exercise MALABAR 22 culminated in the seas off Japan recently.**

- The Indian Navy was represented by Eastern Fleet ships Shivalik and Kamorta.
- The sea phase of MALABAR 22 was conducted over a period of five days near Yokosuka and witnessed live weapon firings, surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare drills and tactical procedures.
- Another highlight of the sea phase was the conduct of War at Sea exercise which enabled all four navies to consolidate interoperability and hone their tactical skills.
- **About**
 - Malabar is a multilateral war-gaming naval exercise that was started in 1992.
 - It began as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the United States.
 - Two more editions of the exercise were carried out in 1995 and 1996, after which there was a break until 2002 in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests.
 - From 2002 onward, the exercise has been conducted every year.
 - Japan and Australia first participated in 2007, and since 2014, India, the US and Japan have participated in the exercise every year.
 - Japan joined the naval exercise in 2015 as a permanent member, and Malabar became a trilateral exercise.
 - In 2020 for the first time in over a decade, the exercise saw the participation of all four Quad members.
 - It was the second time that Australia participated in the Malabar series of Naval exercises.
 - In 2007, there were two Malabar Exercises:
 - ✓ the first off Okinawa island of Japan in the western Pacific, which marked the first time that the exercise was held away from Indian shores;
 - ✓ a second Malabar Exercise was held in September 2007, off Visakhapatnam, which saw India, Japan, the United States, Australia and Singapore participate.
- **Does India conduct any other naval exercises with these countries?**
 - India has several kinds of bilateral and multilateral military exercises with all these nations.
 - The Indian Navy conducted a number of Passage Exercises (PASSEX) with the navies of Japan, Australia, and the US. These are basic exercises to increase operability between the navies.
 - India-Japan: JIMEX
 - India-US: Yudh Abhyas
- 4. **Bharat Gaurav Trains Scheme**
 - ❖ **Context: To give concerted thrust to efforts for promotion of rail based tourism through provision of better quality coaches and viable tour packages, the Bharat Gaurav Trains Scheme has been reviewed.**
 - In 2021, the Indian Railways launched Bharat Gaurav trains that will be operated by private players and run on theme-based circuits.
 - Through this policy, which offers operators the "Right of Use" of its rakes and infrastructure, the Railways has liberalised and simplified a part of operations that was otherwise carried out mostly by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).
 - While any entity can run these trains, including state governments, it is implied that the policy is targeted at tour operators.
 - Under this programme, private players and tour operators can procure trains from railways on lease and operate them on any circuit of their choice and decide fares, routes, and quality of services.
 - However, the railways will ensure that there is no abnormality in the prices.
 - **Who can apply to take trains under Bharat Gaurav scheme**
 - From individuals to societies, trusts, groups, tour operators and even state governments can apply to take these trains and run them on special tourism circuits based on a theme.
 - The railways have allocated around 190 trains for these theme-based circuits, described as the third segment in services offered by the national transporter after the freight and passenger segments.
 - Unlike the regular train service, the Bharat Gaurav trains will showcase India's rich cultural heritage and historical places to the people of India and the world.
 - Under the scheme, the service providers will offer an all-inclusive package to tourists, including rail travel, hotel accommodation, sightseeing arrangement, visit historical or heritage sites, tour guides.
 - Moreover, providers will also have full flexibility to decide package costs based on the level of services being offered.
 - Customer support units will be made functional in the field for hand-holding the service provider and for smooth implementation of this scheme.
 - **Salient Features of Revised Policy:**
 - Henceforth, only Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches will be allotted under the Bharat Gaurav Trains scheme.
 - Ministry of Railways has decided not to levy the overhead components in the Fixed and Variable Haulage Charges for operation of Bharat Gaurav Trains under the scheme. This would entail approximately 33% concession by IR for promotion of rail tourism under Bharat Gaurav Trains Scheme.
 - The existing service providers, who have already been allotted ICF rakes under the framework of Bharat Gaurav Trains Policy would be given option to switch over to LHB rakes for the remaining period of agreement on the

revised charges. If they opt to continue with already allotted rates, benefit of revised charges would be available with prospective effect.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. India's data storage center industry had leap-frogged at least a decade in the past couple of years. Discuss.

Start your answer by briefly introducing the concept of data center.

- Discuss the present status and prospects of data center industry in India.
- Discuss the reasons for accelerated growth of India's Data storage center industry.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- Data center is a dedicated secure space within a building/centralized location where computing and networking equipment is concentrated for the purpose of collecting, storing, processing, distributing or allowing access to large amounts of data.
- In recent times, India has witnessed an exponential growth in digital-commerce, digital entertainment and use of social media with India's mobile data consumption is the highest in the world and is constantly increasing.
- The current size of the India data center industry is around USD 5.6 billion and the size of the digital economy in India is estimated to grow from USD 200 billion in 2017-18 to USD 1 trillion by 2025.
- Reasons for accelerated growth of India's Data storage center industry.

• **Impact of Covid-19:**

- The unprecedented Covid-19 crisis propelled the data center business providing an unexpected tailwind.
- Technology adoption and digitization across the sectors were fast-tracked globally and India also leap-frogged at least a decade in the past couple of years.
- The lockdown and subsequent restrictions became a massive catalyst for digitization across the sectors like banking, education, and shopping etc.
 - This led to increased use of data consumption and internet bandwidth across the country.

○ **Government Push:**

- The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has set up state-of-the-art National Data Centers (NDCs) at NIC Headquarters in Delhi, Pune, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar and 37 small Data Centers at various State Capitals.
- The first Data Centre was launched in Hyderabad in 2008.
- These NDCs form the core of e-Governance Infrastructure in India by providing services to various e-Governance initiatives undertaken by the Government of India.
- The foundation stone of the first NDC for Northeastern Region (NEDC) was laid in Guwahati, Assam in February 2021.
- Currently, there are about 138 data centers (DCs) across India with at least 57% of the current IT capacity being in Mumbai & Chennai.
- The primary colocation data center area in India is Mumbai with its location facing the west coast making it well connected to the Middle East and Europe due to multiple submarine cables landing there.
- Further, the government had released the Draft Data Center Policy, which aims to simplify clearances for setting up data centers in the country.

Conclusion

The data center expansion is the right step taken by the government as it will support the growth in data volumes and further support the high growth in e-commerce, increase in usage of social media, greater preference for over the top (OTT) platforms, the government's impetus to the Digital India initiative and rapid digitalisation of services across industries (Industry 4.0 and 5G).

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements
 1. Under the old pension scheme employee are required to contribute in the pension.
 2. In new pension scheme there is no provision for contribution from employee side.
 Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2**
2. Consider the following statements in relation to the Artemis I Mission;
 1. Artemis I is a manned mission of NASA and ESA.
 2. It will be the first in a series of increasingly complex missions to establish a long-term human presence on the Moon.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. According to recent update India is to make adjustments to its capital gains tax structure in the upcoming budget, with reference to this news consider the following
1. Stock in trade
 2. Personal effect
 3. Jewellery
 4. Rural agricultural land
- Capital asset excludes all assets except which of the above?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 4 only
 - (d) 3 only**
4. Consider the following statements about Malabar Exercise:
1. The biannual Malabar exercise started as a multilateral event between the navies of India, the United States and Japan.
 2. India is holding the exercise in the Bay of Bengal and alternatively in the Sea of Japan.
- Which of the above are statements are incorrect?
- (a) 1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. With reference to the Bharat Gaurav trains, consider the following statements:
1. According to the Bharat Gaurav policy, any operator or service provider, or virtually anyone, can lease trains from Indian Railways to run on a theme-based circuit as a special tourism package.
 2. The tenure of the arrangement is a minimum of five years and maximum of the codal life of the coach.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. "Patola" often mentioned in news is related to which of the following?
- (a) Performing arts in Chattisgarh
 - (b) Weaving popular in Gujarat**
 - (c) Shadow Puppetry in Maharashtra
 - (d) Temple architecture of Ganga Dynasty
7. At recent G20 summit in Bali, India announced a Young Professionals Scheme with which country?
- (a) USA
 - (b) UK**
 - (c) Canada
 - (d) France
8. BASIC is a grouping of countries comprise of which of the following?
1. India
 2. South Africa
 3. China
 4. Indonesia
 5. Bangladesh
 6. Brazil
- Choose the correct answer using the codes given below
- (a) 1,2,3 and 5
 - (b) 1,3,4, and 6
 - (c) 2,3,4 and 5
 - (d) 1,2,3 and 6**
9. Consider the following statements
1. The BRICS countries has proposed a policy called the 'Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism' in COP 27 to tax products such as cement and steel that are extremely carbon intensive which is going to effect from the 2026 called 'Carbon Border Tax'.
 2. BASIC countries call for a united solidarity response by developing countries to any unfair shifting of responsibilities from developed to developing countries.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. Which of the following is/are the revenue expenditure of the Government?
1. Pension payment
 2. Wages and salary payment
 3. EPF contribution as a employer
 4. Interest payment
- Choose the correct statement using the codes given below
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1,2 and 4 only
 - (c) 2,3 and 4 only
 - (d) 1,2,3 and 4**