AGNIPATH SCHEME

The Union Cabinet approved an attractive recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces. The scheme is called AGNIPATH and the youth selected under this scheme will be known as Agniveers.

Terms & Conditions:

- The policy, which comes into immediate effect, will hereafter govern the enrolment for the three services. Under the AGNIPATH scheme, the Agniveers will be enrolled in the Forces under respective Service Acts for a period of four years.

- They would form a distinct rank in the Armed Forces, different from any other existing ranks.

- During this period of service to the nation, the Agniveers will be imparted with various military skills and experience, discipline, physical fitness, leadership qualities, courage and patriotism.

- Post this stint of four years, the Agniveers will be infused into the civil society where they can contribute immensely towards the nation building process.

- Upon the completion of four years of service, Agniveers will be offered an opportunity to apply for permanent enrolment in the Armed Forces.

- Enrolment will be based on 'All India All Class' basis and the eligible age will be in range from 17.5 to 21 years.

Benefits to the Agniveers:

- Agniveers will be given an attractive customised monthly package along with Risk and Hardship allowances as applicable in the three services.

- On completion of the engagement period of four years, Agniveers will be paid one time 'Seva Nidhi' package which shall comprise their contribution including accrued interest thereon and matching contribution from the Government. The 'Seva Nidhi' will be exempt from Income Tax.

- Agniveers will be provided non-contributory Life Insurance Cover of Rs 48 lakhs for the duration of their engagement period in the Indian Armed Forces.

INDIA APPEARS TO BE EXPANDING ITS NUCLEAR ARSENAL, CLAIMS SIPRI

In News:

- As per Stockholm-based defence think tank SIPRI, India had 160 nuclear warheads as on January 2022 and it appears to be expanding its nuclear arsenal.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

- SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

- Established in 1966, SIPRI is based in Stockholm, Sweden. It is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.

- Its mission is to:

o undertake research and activities on security, conflict and peace;

o provide policy analysis and recommendations;

o facilitate dialogue and build capacities;

o promote transparency and accountability; and

o deliver authoritative information to global audiences.

News Summary

- SIPRI has launched the findings of **SIPRI Yearbook 2022**, which assesses the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

Key findings

- **Nuclear arsenals are expected to grow**

o Despite a marginal decrease in the number of nuclear warheads in 2021, nuclear arsenals are expected to grow over the coming decade.

o This is due to the fact that the nine nuclear-armed states continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals.

- These nine states are - the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea).

o The total number of nuclear weapons declined slightly between January 2021 and January 2022.

o However, the number will probably increase in the next decade.

- **Nuclear arsenal**

o At the start of 2022, the 9 nuclear-armed states possessed an estimated 12,705 nuclear weapons.

World nuclear forces, January 2022					
Country	Deployed warheads[a]	Stored warheads[b]	Total stockpile[b]	Total inventory 2022[b]	Total inventory 2021[b]
United States	1 744	1 964	3 708	5 428	5 550
Russia	1 588	2 889	4 477	5 977	6 2..
United Kingdom	120[e]	60[f]	180[f]	225[f]	2..
France	280	10	290	290	2..
China		350[g]	350[g]	350[g]	3..
India		160	160	160	1..
Pakistan		165	165	165	1..
Israel		90	90	90	
North Korea	..	20[h]	20[h]	20[h]	[40–5..
Total	3 732	5 708	9 440	12 705	13 0..

• **Country specific observation of the report**

• **Nuclear arsenal of Russia and USA**

o Russia and the USA together possess over 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons.

o Although Russian and US total warhead inventories continued to decline in 2021.

- This was due to the dismantling of warheads that had been retired from military service several years ago.

- **China is in the middle of a substantial expansion**

o China is in the middle of a substantial expansion of its nuclear weapon arsenal.

- Satellite images have indicated the construction of over 300 new missile silos.

- A missile silo is also known as missile launch facility or nuclear silo.

o Several additional nuclear warheads are thought to have been assigned to operational forces in 2021 following the delivery of new mobile launchers and a submarine.

- **UK has decided to increase its arsenal**

o The UK in 2021 announced its decision to increase the ceiling on its total warhead stockpile, in a reversal of decades of gradual disarmament policies.

o The UK also announced that it would no longer publicly disclose figures for the country's operational nuclear weapon stockpile, deployed warheads or deployed missiles.

- **India and Pakistan**

o India and Pakistan appear to be expanding their nuclear arsenals.

- o Both countries introduced and continued to develop new types of nuclear delivery system in 2021.
- o India's nuclear stockpile increased from 156 in January 2021 to 160 in January 2022.
- ▪ India does not share official data on its nuclear arsenal.
- o Pakistan's nuclear stockpile has remained at 165 in January 2021 and January 2022.
- ▪ India and Pakistan make statements about some of their missile tests but provide no information about the status or size of their arsenals.

CAN THE NEW GOOGLE CHATBOT BE SENTIENT?

In News:

- Recently, an engineer associated with Google has claimed that an Artificially Intelligent (AI) chatbot he was working on had become sentient and was showing the ability to think and reason like a human being.

About Artificial Intelligence:

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of a computer or a robot to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and discernment.
- The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience.
- AI algorithms are trained using large datasets so that they can identify patterns, make predictions and recommend actions, much like a human would, just faster and better.

Difference between AI and Regular Programming:

- Regular programs define all possible scenarios and only operate within those defined scenarios.
- AI 'trains' a program for a specific task and allows it to explore and improve on its own.
- A good AI programme 'figures out' what to do when met with unfamiliar situations.
- For example, Microsoft Word cannot improve on its own, but facial recognition software can get better at recognizing faces the longer it runs.

Current Scenario:

- Governments worldwide are ramping up investment in AI and figuring out ways to apply and encourage its applications.

- For instance, in Europe, spending on AI is estimated to increase by 33 percent between 2020 and 2023.

- Currently AI is used in the following Things/Fields:

o Virtual Assistant or Chatbots

o Agriculture and Farming

o Autonomous Flying

o Retail, Shopping and Fashion

o Security and Surveillance

o Sports Analytics and Activities

o Manufacturing and Production

o Live Stock and Inventory Management

o Self-driving Cars or Autonomous Vehicles

o Healthcare and Medical Imaging Analysis

o Warehousing and Logistic Supply Chain

Steps taken by the Central Government to Promote AI:

- In 2020, the Central Government increased the outlay for Digital India to USD 477 million to boost AI, IoT, Big Data, Cybersecurity, Machine Learning and Robotics.

o India's flagship digital initiative i.e. Digital India aims to make the internet more accessible, promoting e-governance, e-banking, e-education and e-health.

- In the 2019 Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government would offer industry-relevant skill training for 10 million youth in India in technologies like AI, Big Data and robotics.

- Additionally, policy-level initiatives by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and programmes around AI by NASSCOM and Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO) have laid the groundwork for future disruption and created a roadmap for AI in India.

o One such initiative was establishing the **Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR)**, a laboratory of the DRDO, in 2014 for research and development in AI, robotics, command and control, networking, information and communication security.

o Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is preparing a new National Curriculum Framework for School Education in pursuance of the National Education Policy 2020.

o This will also aim at introducing a basic course on AI at the secondary level.

News Summary:

• Recently, an engineer associated with Google has claimed that an Artificially Intelligent (AI) chatbot he was working on had become sentient and was showing the ability to think and reason like a human being.

• According to the employee, the AI was sentient enough to be compared to a human child in terms of expressing thoughts and feelings.

• He said that the chatbot, called **LaMDA** (language model for dialogue applications), was able to have conversations with him about rights and personhood.

• However, Google has stated that the claims about LaMDA being sentient are false and that the company has tons of evidence against it.

About LaMDA:

• LaMDA is Google's modern conversational agent enabled with a neural network capable of deep learning.

• The algorithm is trained using 1.56 trillion words of public dialogue data and web text on diverse topics.

• The chatbot is not yet public, but users are permitted to interact with it.

• Google claims that LaMDA can make sense of nuanced conversation and engage in a fluid and natural conversation.

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is celebrating Elimination of Child Labour Week in the honour of World Day Against Child Labour from 12th June to 20th June, 2022.

About:

- NCPCR is also under the process of creating a separate link for child labour for their rescue and rehabilitation process in the Balswaraj Portal of the NCPCR.

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched World Day Against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action needed to eliminate it.

- It is celebrated each year on 12 June. Theme for 2022 is "Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour"

- Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) calls on the global community to end child labour in all its forms by 2025.

- Guided by the principles enshrined in ILO's Minimum Age Convention No. 138 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182, the ILO Programme on Child Labour (IPEC) works to achieve the effective abolition of child labour.