

INTERNAL SECURITY**Need for National Security Strategy amidst rising internal and external security threats in the country.****WHY IN NEWS**

India has finally begun the process of implementing a National Security Strategy, following years of deliberation. The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) has begun gathering input from various Central ministries and departments.

The National Security Strategy: What Is It?

- Comprehending National Security Strategy: A National Security Strategy (NSS) is an all-inclusive document that delineates a nation's security goals and the methods by which they are to be realized.
- The NSS is a living document that is updated on a regular basis to reflect evolving conditions and new threats.

The National Security Strategy's Scope:

- It covers a broad spectrum of contemporary threats and challenges. This encompasses not only antiquated dangers but also more recent, contemporary military concerns that have grown in importance in the linked world of today.
- It includes not just conventional threats like those pertaining to the military and defense industry, but also unconventional ones like information warfare, supply chain disruptions, financial and economic security, food and energy security, and environmental concerns.

The National Security Strategy's function in India

- The National Security Strategy is a crucial instrument in defending the interests of the country because it offers a comprehensive assessment of India's national security environment and a plan of action to tackle the issues mentioned above.

What National Security Strategy Does India Need?**India Needs a National Security Strategy:**

- In military talks, the subject of an Indian national security strategy has come up frequently. But despite numerous attempts, it hasn't been developed and put into action because there hasn't been a unified, all-government effort, and the government has purposefully kept its national security goals under wraps.

Urgency in the face of intricate threats and geopolitical uncertainties,

- India has to create a national security strategy immediately because of the complexity of new threats and the heightened unpredictability of world geopolitics.

Revisions to Current Directives and the Function of Military Reforms:

- The need to update the current political direction of the Armed Forces has been highlighted by a former chief general of the Army.
- The 2009 Operational Directive of the Defence Minister is the only political directive currently in effect for the Armed Forces.
- Experts have emphasized that a comprehensive national security strategy should be the foundation for major military reforms like the theaterization of the armed forces.
- It has been said that trying to implement military reforms without a defined plan is similar to not having a strategy.

Nations Having Strategies for National Security:

- A National Security Strategy is in place and is periodically updated in the majority of developed nations with sophisticated armed forces and security systems.
- Russia, the US, and the UK have all released national security plans.
- A similar policy, known as the Comprehensive National Security, is in place in China and is strongly related to its system of government.

The Policy Makers' Role:

- The government ought to set aside money specifically for cybersecurity.
- assembling a core group of cyber defenders to combat hackers with state support.
- The talent pool in software development in India ought to be tapped into by offering employment opportunities.
- state-level cybersecurity capability programs are being funded entirely by federal funds.
- Pakistan has also released a 2022–2026 National Security Policy that outlines its priorities and goals for national security.

Exploitation, Deterrence, and Defence:

The three primary elements of any national threat-fighting strategy are as follows:

- Important information infrastructure needs to be safeguarded, and private businesses and individual ministries need to set up policies for truthful reporting of security breaches.
- In terms of national security, deterrence is a very complicated topic. For example, nuclear deterrence works well because adversaries' capabilities are known, but national security strategies do not have the same information.
- The Indian military must first gather intelligence, assess targets, and prepare the specific instruments needed to ensure long-term national security before putting together a strong plan.

The Way Ahead

- **Modifying the National Security Strategy:** The 21st-century national security strategy will outline the resources that must be safeguarded as well as the characteristics of adversaries who aim to overwhelm a target country's populace through unexpected actions that confuse them.
- **Establishing Priorities** in order to support various innovative and technological frontiers such as hydrogen fuel cells, seawater desalination, thorium for nuclear technology, anti-computer viruses, and novel immunity-boosting medications, new departments will be needed in order to meet the national security priorities.
- **Modifying the Strategy:** The new national security strategy will need to develop a deterrent strategy in order to anticipate the enemy in multiple dimensions and carry out demonstrative but constrained pre-emptive strikes.
- China's cyber capability factor presents a new threat to India, necessitating the development of a new strategy.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Context: The attempt of telcos to double dip by charging both consumers and content providers is not only avaricious but also undermines net neutrality.

About Net neutrality

- To enable access to the internet, various gateways have come up in the last few decades in the form of telecom service providers, personal computers and smartphones, operating systems, etc.
- However, when these gateways enable and restrict access to other gateways or networks, the openness of the internet is threatened.

What is NET Neutrality?

- The idea behind net neutrality is that everyone should have access to an open, equal internet, regardless of the platform, device, or application they use or the content they consume.
- Tim Wu, a law professor at Columbia University, came up with the phrase. It is a general term used in debates about online freedom of expression, service competition, innovation, pricing, and internet traffic management in public policy and regulatory contexts.
- Hence, Net Neutrality guarantees that telecommunication and Internet service providers shall handle all data on the Internet equitably and refrain from imposing differential fees or treatments based on the user, content, site, platform, or application.
- The connection providers are prohibited from taking actions like restricting, throttling, or giving any content preferential speeds.

Rise in OTT services & concerns of telecom companies

- **Shortfall of revenue:**
 - For more than a decade now, telecom companies have seen revenue from traditional streams such as voice calls and Short Message Service (SMS) come under pressure, as competing OTT services are often free.
- **Upgradation of the infrastructure:**
 - At the same time, they have had to invest heavily in upgrading their infrastructure to handle increased data traffic, without necessarily seeing an equivalent rise in revenue.
- **Differential treatment:**
 - It is also the argument that OTT services are not subject to the same level of taxation and licensing fees, leading to an uneven playing field.
- **The demand of telecom companies**
 - Telecom companies demand that content providers such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ Hotstar be asked to share in the costs of bandwidth.

- They argue that streaming platforms are free riders, benefiting from the infrastructure built and maintained by the telecom companies.

Arguments by OTT platforms

- **Only the internet 'providers':**
 - Telecom companies do not own the Internet; rather, they provide access to it. Consumers pay the telcos for access services by purchasing data plans.
 - On the flip side, the use of OTT services has led to a surge in data consumption, which is a growing revenue stream for telecom companies.
- **Democratic exchange of content:**
 - Net neutrality supporters believe that the internet should remain free, open and nondiscriminatory and that this is essential for a democratic exchange of ideas and knowledge, ethical business practices, fair competition and ongoing innovation.
- **Provision of CDNs:**
 - OTTs already pay for the content delivery networks (CDNs) to create pathways that substantially augment the capacity of the internet to deliver their content.
- **Coexistence in different 'markets':**
 - OTT services compete in their own market on the basis of variety and quality of content, the quality of streaming (such as, support for HD or better resolution or 5.1 surround sound), ease in navigation and discovery of content, and its availability on multiple devices.
- The consumers pay the price for these benefits as compared to the alternatives.
 - Similarly, in the marketplace for Internet access, the consumers are free to choose the provider that offers them the highest bandwidth, data volume, and reliability at an affordable price.
 - These two are inherently distinct markets because services from one are not substitutable for services in the other.
 - Therefore, it is logical to maintain a separation of costs between these two markets.
- **Telecoms' liberty to increase their prices:**
 - As argued by OTT providers, Telecom companies capitalise on this rising demand and the availability of OTT content by providing connectivity to the Internet and charging subscribers for it.
 - If they fail to cover costs, telecom companies are at liberty to increase their prices, which should go towards maintaining and upgrading their infrastructure.
- **Costs ultimately paid by consumers:**
 - If OTT platforms were to acquiesce to the demands of the telcos, the incurred costs would trickle down to subscribers, either through increased subscription fees or degraded service quality for those platforms.
 - This outcome can only be detrimental to consumers who have come to rely on OTT services for entertainment, education, and professional pursuits.

TRAI regulation

About:

In 2016, the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** ruled in favour of Net neutrality, the concept that all traffic on an Internet network has to be treated equally.

The telecom regulator concluded that programmes such as **Free Basics by Facebook (now Meta)** and **telecom operators'** plans to charge extra for data calls using apps like Viber would be prohibited, as all Internet access had to be priced equally.

- The **Department of Telecommunications in 2018** embedded the net neutrality concept into the Unified Licence, whose conditions all telecom operators and Internet providers are bound by
- **Global impact:**
 - These steps taken by TRAI were noted elsewhere in the world.
 - The **Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)** and **TRAI** adopted a **Joint Statement for an Open Internet** in 2018, later reaffirmed in 2020.
 - The two organisations agreed through this **memorandum of understanding** to cooperate in developing technological and policy initiatives for net neutrality.
 - Many other countries have also adopted net neutrality, thereafter.

Way Forward

- It is imperative for all stakeholders, including policymakers, to recognise the long-term ramifications of acquiescing to the short-sighted demands of telecom companies.
- Upholding the principles of net neutrality is not merely about preserving the ethos of an open Internet but is also intrinsic to fostering a conducive environment for innovation, competition, and consumer welfare, especially countries such as India where the Internet is going to be the carrier of all Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

PRELIM FACTS**1.Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched Jal Diwali-Women for Water, Water for Women Campaign****Context:**

- It was launched in collaboration with the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).
- Phase I shall witness participation from all States/ UTs, except for Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Campaign aims to provide a platform for inclusion of women in water governance by

- Providing knowledge about water treatment processes through visits to Water Treatment Plants.
- Providing insight into water quality testing protocols and ensures quality water delivery to citizens.
- Instilling a sense of ownership and belonging among women towards water infrastructure.

Role of women in water governance

- Responsible for collecting and managing water needs for domestic purposes like cooking food, drinking etc.
- Ensure hygiene and good sanitary conditions to prevent water borne diseases like cholera.
- Utilise their traditional knowledge about water resource w.r.t. quality, reliability and acceptable storage methods.

AMRUT was launched by MoHUA in 2015 in 500 cities and towns for developing basic infrastructure in water supply sectors; storm water drainage; green spaces and parks etc.

- AMRUT 2.0 (2021-22 to 2025-26) provides universal coverage of water supply through functional taps in all households.

2.Fifth meeting of Conference of Parties (COP 5) to Minamata Convention held in Geneva**Context:**

Minamata Convention on Mercury, adopted in 2013, is first global legally binding treaty to protect human health and environment from adverse effects of mercury.

- It came into force in 2017 and India ratified it in 2018.
- Mercury may have toxic effects on nervous system, thyroid, kidneys, lungs, immune system, eyes, skin etc.

Key decisions adopted at COP 5

- For the first time, COP pushed to reduce mercury supply sources and trade by strengthening capacities at national level and developing study on global supply, trade, production and use of mercury compounds.
- Implementation of projects and programmes undertaken under Convention with participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- Limit of 15 mg/kg concentration of mercury is set as threshold for wastes contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds.
- Amend Annex A of Convention to list phaseout dates for certain types of batteries, switches and relays, fluorescent lamps, and cosmetics.
- Amend Annex B of Convention to mandate phaseout of mercury in polyurethane production by 2025.

Annexes of Convention

- Annex A - Contains Mercury-added products.
 - Eg. Batteries, Compact fluorescent lamps, Pesticides, biocides etc.
- Annex B - Contains Manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used.
 - Eg. Production of polyurethane using mercury catalysts.
- Annex C - Contains Artisanal and small-scale gold mining.
- Annex D - Contains List of point sources of emissions of mercury and mercury compounds to atmosphere.
- Annex E - Contains arbitration and conciliation procedures.

3. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) released State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report 2023

Context:

- FAO will commit two consecutive SOFA events to the same theme for the first time.
- The 2023 report includes national-level True Cost Accounting (TCA) evaluations to discover hidden agrifood system consequences, while 2024 report will focus on in-depth targeted assessments to identify strategies to reduce them.

Key findings

- The global quantified HCs of agrifood systems are worth at least 10 trillion dollars.
- Dietary HCs cause diseases and reduce labor productivity, and are especially prevalent in high- and middle-income nations.
- Environmental HCs account for more than 20% of quantifiable HCs and account for nearly one-third of agricultural value added.
- HCs, which are projected to account for 27% of the GDP of Low Income Countries, are linked to poverty and malnutrition.
- TCA estimation is required to: measure the actual impact of complex agrisystems; make responsible decisions and increase sustainability; and improve agrisystem performance and resilience.
- Factors influencing the current operation of agri-food systems include: institutional policy and distribution gaps, corruption, free riding, and so on.
- True cost challenges include: a lack of political will, opposition to change, data availability and quality, underreporting, and so on.

4. Operation All Clear

- Bhutan King's recalled Operation All Clear, during his recent visit to India.
- Operation was launched by the Royal Bhutan Army with It aimed to remove rebel outfits from Assam i.e., United Liberation Front of Asom and National Democratic Front of Bodoland.
 - Kamatapur Liberation Organisation which was active in north Bengal.
- They were provided logistical and medical assistance from the Indian Army.

5. Balban's Tomb

Context:

- Several renovations within the Mehrauli's Archaeological Park were unveiled, with one of them being the tomb of Balban

Ghiyas-ud-din Balban:

- Ghiyas-ud-din Balban was a Sultan of the Mamluk (Slave) dynasty, the first of the Delhi Sultanate dynasties.
- Ruled from Delhi between 1266 AD and 1287 AD.
- He was sold as a slave to the then-ruler Iltumish in 1232 CE but was later released.

Balban's Tomb:

- Location: Mehrauli's Archaeological Park, New Delhi.
- The tomb is situated within the archaeological park and was originally known as the "Dar-ul-Amaan" or "Haven of Safety." It was a square building with spacious rooms on either side.
- It is considered one of the first structures in India to feature true arch construction, with the keystone placed at the center. This architectural innovation allowed for even distribution of the weight of the superstructure and became a common feature in Indo-Islamic architecture in Delhi.
- Purpose: It offered refuge to those seeking protection from debt collectors and pursuers. Even individuals who had committed murder could find solace within its walls, as the Sultan would compensate the families of the victims.
- Historical Accounts: The structure is referenced by historical figures, including Ibn Batuta, who spoke of it as one of Balban's acts of generosity.

6. Bharat Atta

The Union Food and Consumer Affairs Ministry flagged off 100 mobile vans for sale of wheat flour (Atta) under 'Bharat' brand, from Kartavya Path, New Delhi.

About 'Bharat Atta'

- 2.5 LMT of wheat @ Rs.21.50/kg has been allocated for Semi-Government and cooperative organisations i.e. Kendriya Bhandar, NCCF and NAFED under Open Market Sale Scheme [OMSS (D)] for converting to atta and offer it for sale to the public under 'Bharat Atta' brand at an MRP not exceeding ₹ 27.50/Kg.
- It will be available at all physical and mobile outlets of Kendriya Bhandar, NAFED and NCCF and will be expanded to other co-op/retail outlets.
- The launch will increase supplies in the market at affordable rates, and will help in continued moderation of prices of this important food item.

Other Steps taken by the GoI for the welfare of ordinary consumers.

- Various measures were taken in the past with regard to Tomato and Onion to cool off prices.
 - The Government had procured tomatoes under Price Stabilisation Fund and made it available at a highly subsidised rate to consumers.
 - In order to check the volatility in prices of onion, the Government maintains an onion buffer under the PSF.
 - The Govt. has imposed Minimum Export Price (MEP) of \$800 per ton on onion on 28.10.2023 to check price rise
- The Centre is also providing Bharat Dal(Chana dal) at Rs. 60 per kg through Kendriya Bhandar, NAFED and NCCF to provide relief to consumers.
- To prevent hoarding, stock limits have been imposed on tur and urad under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 till 31.12.2023.
- The Basic Duty on Crude Palm Oil, Crude Soyabean Oil and Crude Sunflower Oil was reduced from 2.5% to Nil.
- The Basic Duty on Refined Soybean oil and Refined Sunflower Oil was reduced to 17.5% from 32.5% and the Basic Duty on Refined Palm Oils was reduced from 17.5% to 12.5% on 21.12.2021.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. You are an experienced civil servant working in a government department responsible for infrastructure development. Your department has recently received a proposal from a well-known construction company to build a major highway that would greatly improve connectivity in a remote region. However, you have discovered through reliable sources that the company has a history of engaging in corrupt practices and bribing government officials to secure contracts. Furthermore, there are concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed highway, as it would pass through ecologically sensitive areas. As a public servant, you are faced with an ethical dilemma regarding whether to support or oppose the project.

Discuss the ethical issues involved in this case and outline the possible courses of action you could take. Evaluate each course of action in terms of its ethical implications and the impact on public administration.

Introduction

In this instance, I have to decide how to respond to a construction company's proposal given its track record of environmental violations and corruption. The plan calls for the construction of a large highway that would promote development and connectivity in an isolated area. But it would also mean sacrificing moral standards and beliefs, as well as running the risk of jeopardizing the environment and the public's confidence. I must therefore balance the benefits and drawbacks of backing or opposing the project while also taking my moral and legal responsibilities as a public servant into account.

Ethical Concerns Raised:

Corruption: Is it morally acceptable to back a project put forth by a business that has a track record of bribing public officials and participating in corrupt activities?

- **Development Issue:** Is it morally right to oppose a project that would enhance development and connectivity in a remote area?
- **Environmental Ethics:** Is it morally acceptable to back a project that would negatively affect the environment in ecologically sensitive areas?
- **Accountability:** Whether it is morally right to downplay or hide facts regarding the company's environmental infractions and corruption.
- **Transparency:** Whether it is morally right to reveal or keep quiet about the company's wrongdoings related to environmental violations and corruption.
- **Justice:** Is it morally right to make sure that all parties concerned receive justice?

Moral precepts that can direct:

- **Public interest:** It is my responsibility as a public servant to act in the people's best interests and to protect their welfare.
- **Integrity and honesty:** I have an obligation to maintain integrity in my work and behavior as a public servant.
- **Accountability and transparency:** I have a responsibility to be both as a public servant and to take responsibility for my choices and actions.
- **Rule of law:** It is my responsibility as a public servant to uphold the rule of law and make sure that nobody is either above or below it.
- **Sustainable development:** It is my responsibility as a public servant to advance sustainable development, which strikes a balance between social, economic, and environmental factors.

Course of Action: I could pursue the following options in light of these moral precepts:

- Support the project: Given that it would provide development and connectivity to a remote area in need, I could support the project.
- The project's advantages exceed its drawbacks. The company's environmental violations and corruption are unrelated to the current proposal and can be addressed independently.
- But doing so would go against the moral precepts of sustainable development, accountability, honesty, integrity, and transparency.
- In addition, it would damage my standing and credibility as a public servant.
- If the company's corruption and environmental violations are made public, it would also expose me to moral and legal risks.

Oppose the project:

- I could object to the project on the grounds that it would entail aiding an unscrupulous and dishonest business that has broken environmental laws.
- The region's biodiversity and ecology would suffer permanent harm as a result of the project.
- There are other approaches to enhancing regional development and connectivity without sacrificing moral standards.
- Nevertheless, doing so would go against the moral precept of the public interest.
- Additionally, it would draw opposition and criticism from a range of stakeholders who might support the project for political or economic reasons.
- In addition, I would have to give a compelling argument and supporting data for rejecting the project.

Look for further details

- Before deciding, I could look into the project in more detail. I could request a social cost-benefit analysis, an independent feasibility study, an environmental impact assessment, etc.
- I could also seek the opinions and input of a variety of stakeholders, including experts, NGOs, and local communities, on the project.
- I could also check with other sources to confirm the company's qualifications and performance history.
- But to do this would take time and resources that might not be feasible or available.
- In addition, it would cause uncertainty and confusion among different stakeholders and slow down the decision-making process.

Conclusion:

In light of this assessment, I would learn more about the project before deciding. Since it would enable me to strike a balance between the many ethical principles and stakeholder interests. In this situation, I believe that this would be the most morally right and sensible course of action. Additionally, it would empower me to make decisions devoid of bias or emotion and instead grounded in data and facts. It would also serve as evidence of my dedication to moral standards, the welfare of the general public, and ethical values.

MCQs

1. With reference to the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED), consider the following statements:

1. It is a leading Indian cooperative organization for agricultural product procurement and marketing founded in 1958.

2. It is registered under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, of 2002.
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
2. With reference to Aquaculture, consider the following :
1. The term aquaculture refers to the cultivation of aquatic organisms in controlled aquatic environments for any commercial, recreational or public purpose.
 2. Aquaculture farming and cultivation is regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
 3. The breeding, rearing and harvesting of plants and animals takes place in all types of water environments except brackish and freshwater ecosystems.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
a) **Only one** b) Only two
c) All Three d) None
3. Consider the following statements regarding 'Bulawa Ballistic Missile'
1. It is a new American ballistic missile, which recently failed in its trial.
 2. It is a two-stage solid-fuel missile.
 3. It can carry six Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs).
- How many of the statements given above are *not* correct?
a) Only one b) **Only two**
c) All three d) None
4. The famous Ambubachi mela is directly linked to which sect/ cult of India?
a) Vaishnavism b) Shaivism
c) Buddhism d) **Tantrism/Shaktism**
5. Which of the following sites in India is currently recognised as a Biosphere Reserve (BR) by UNESCO but not part of its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) list?
a) **Seshachalam** b) Gulf of Mannar
c) Similipal d) Panna
6. Which of the following declaration/convention is related to road safety
a) **Brasilia declaration**
b) New Delhi declaration
c) Budapest Convention
d) Beijing declaration
7. With reference to 'World Local Production Forum' consider the following statements
1. It is an initiative of the World Bank.
2. It aims to provide a global platform to discuss key challenges in promoting local production and technology transfer.
Select the INCORRECT statement(s)
a) **1 only** b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. 'State of Climate Services report' which was recently in news is related to
a) UNFCCC
b) **World Metrological Organization (WMO)**
c) United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)
d) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
9. With reference to 'Wolbachia', consider the following statements
Statement 1- Wolbachia is a genus of bacteria that is present naturally in many of the insects
Statement 2- Wolbachia helps to reduce dengue, Zika and other mosquito transmitted diseases.
Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
a) **Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement II is the correct explanation for Statement-I**
b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
c) Statement-I is correct but statement II is incorrect
d) Statement -I is incorrect but Statement -II is correct
10. Consider the following statements about 'Project Kusha'
1. It is a long-range air defense system for India Air Force (IAF).
 2. It is a joint project between the DRDO and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Israel Aerospace Industries.
 3. The system reportedly has a single-shot kill chance of at least 80% and over 90% when two missiles are fired after each other.
- Select the correct statement(s)
a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
c) **1 and 3 only** d) All the above