DOUBTILYA

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

• Robo Army
• River linking through water transportation
• Indian Rivers Inter-link Project
The question of whether to deploy on the battlefield armed robots that would make their own decisions has raised many ethical questions, among them:

- Will robot fighters be able to **distinguishing between enemy troops and innocent civilians**?
- Must robot fighters do this perfectly or is it enough if they merely **make good decisions** more often than human soldiers?
- **Can programmers imagine every** situation that robots will encounter on the battlefield? If not, robots could **make lethal mistakes** when first deployed.
- Might robots be “**hacked**” by the enemy and turned against friendly troops? If robots contained a remote “**kill switch**” to shut them down in case that happened, might that be hacked by the enemy to disable them?
- What if rogue friendly soldiers **override a robot’s safety** and ethical programs and use it to take some action against the rules of war?
- If robots **break the rules of war**, who takes responsibility? The manufacturer? The programmer? The nearest human commander?
- If robots **gather information** on the conduct of human troops using video or other sensors, might soldiers feel they are being “**spied on**” and resent the robots, thus harming morale?
- If robots reduce casualties for an aggressor, might they make war more likely, especially against a **technologically inferior opponent**?

But Experts also cite advantages to using robots on the battlefield. For example, they could:

- Replace soldiers in **dangerous missions**, such as crawling through caves or in street-to-street urban combat, **reducing casualties**.
- Reduce civilian casualties if used properly and if **sufficient ethical programming** could be developed.
- Act as a “**force multiplier**.” One human fighter could command a squad of robots working semi autonomously.
- Make **faster decisions than humans**, an important advantage on the modern battlefield.
- Be **unaffected by anger, revenge, hunger, fear, fatigue, or stress**.
- Use video or other **sensors to monitor** human soldiers on both sides of a battle for violations of the laws of war.
- **Refuse to carry out an unethical or illegal command**, something a human soldier might be pressured not to do.
Indian Rivers Inter-link Project

- It was aimed at, link Indian rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals and so reduce floods in some parts and water shortages in other parts of India.

- The Inter-link project has been split into three parts
  - Northern Himalayan rivers
  - Southern Peninsular
  - Intrastate rivers linking component

- The project is being managed by India's National Water Development Agency (NWDA), under its Ministry of Water Resources.

- Even though the average rainfall in India is about 4,000 billion cubic meters but most of India's rainfall comes over a 4-month period (June - September).

+Ve things:

- Interlinking of rivers will help entire India to have water throughout the year.
  - In Rainey season most of it falls in northern and eastern part of India, the amount of rainfall in southern and western part are comparatively low.

- Interlinking of rivers will be a practical solution when monsoon failed
  - because the water can be stored or water can be transferred from water surplus area to deficit.

- The Ganga Basin, Brahmaputra basin sees floods almost every year.
  - Floods will be controlled and scarcity of water will be reduced.

- This can be used as Commercial inland waterways and which helps in faster movement of goods from one place to other.

- Interlinking creates a new occupation like fishing, farm houses, for people living in and around these canals.

Problems:

- mass deforestation
  - Huge amount of distortion in the existing environment like cutting trees, clearing dense forest, this will have impact on rains and in turn affect the whole cycle of life.

- Change their course
  - Usually rivers change their course and direction in about 100 years and if this happens after interlinking, then the project will not be feasible.

- fresh water entering seas
this will cause a serious threat to the marine life system and will be a major ecological disaster.

- **Submerging of land**
  - huge amount of area, will be submerged leading to displacement of people and government will have to spend more to rehabilitate these people.

- **Huge initial investment**
  - government will have to take loans from the foreign sources which would increase the burden on the government and country will fall in a debt trap.

- **Conflict between Countries and states**
  - Countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan might protest for this.

Interlinking of rivers is definitely a good solution for the scarcity of water, but interlinking has to take place after a detailed study so that does not cause any problem to the environment or aquatic life.

**River linking through water transportation**

It was proposed to link the rivers through water transportation, like connectivity between national highways.

I. By digging large canals among states to transport & reserve flood waters throughout the year.
II. There is no need to go for lift irrigation process.

Proposed Concept:

- For the purpose of water transport, big canals planned.
- Same level water must be maintained in all the canals.
- 62,000 TMC flood waters were mixing into sea every year.
- If 25% of the flood waters transported to proposed canals then, 15,000 TMC waters can come into usage.
- Then yearlong 15,000 km water transportation will be created newly.
- This project will be divided into 3 parts.

**Himalayan River transportation**

- Stared from Jammu to North eastern states,
  - 150 meters width, 10 meters depth, 4500km long canals will be constructed.
  - Yearlong 10 meters water storage must be maintained, in order to use it as a water transportation channel in all the seasons.
Small reservoirs will be constructed to maintain balancing in water level (250 meters width and 30 meters depth).

By this plan we can minimise the effects of Ganga & Brahmaputra floods.

**Central river transportation**
- From Vindhya’s to Maharashtra (through Bihar and west Bengal).
- Here We can plan for water power plants on Mahanadi and Narmada rivers.

**South water transportation**
- From Maharashtra to Kanyakumari.

By this proposal we can reduce
- Land
- Money
- Wastage
- Disputes between states.
- 24*365 water transportation

**National Pension Scheme**

National Pension Scheme, also known as NPS, is a quasi-EET instrument in India where 40% of the corpus escapes tax at maturity, while 60% of the corpus is taxable. Of the 60% taxable corpus, 40% is tax-exempt as it has to be compulsorily used to purchase an annuity.

- The annuity income will be taxed, though.
- The remaining 20% alone will now be taxed at slab rates on withdrawal.
- From 2016, an additional tax benefit of Rs 50,000 under Section 80CCD(1b) is provided under NPS, which is over the Rs 1.5 lakh exemption of Section 80C.
- Fund management and asset allocation are important parts of NPS.
- NPS is considered one of the best best tax saving instrument, after 40% of the corpus was made tax-free at the time of maturity and it is ranked just below Equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS).
- NPS offers subscribers a choice of two record keeping agencies: NCRA (NSDL-CRA) and KCRA (Karvy-CRA).
• In 2017 Union budget of India, 25% exemption of the contribution made by an employee has been announced as a form of premature partial withdrawal in NPS.
• This amendment will take effect from 1st April, 2018 and will, accordingly, apply in relation to the assessment year 2018-19.
• NPS is a market-linked annuity product.

The subscriber can choose to invest either, wholly or in combination, in four types of investment schemes offered by the pension fund managers. These are:

• Scheme E (equity) which allows up to 75% equity participation, this is invested in stocks.
• Scheme C (corporate debt) which invests only in high-quality corporate bonds.
• Scheme G (government/Gilt bonds) which invests only in government bonds.
• Scheme A (Alternative Investment) which allows up to 5% (Newly added asset class only for private sector subscriber with active choice).