West Bengal Judicial Service (Mains) 2020

English Essay, Composition and Précis Writing · compulsory paper

Time: 3 hours · Full marks: 100

1. Write an essay on any one of the following topics:
(a) Social media and social awareness
(b) India's progress in the field of science and technology in the last century
(c) Necessity of art in the modern world (30)

2. Write a précis of the following passage and add a title: (20+5=25)

The world has warmed more than one degree Celsius since the Industrial Revolution. The Paris climate agreement - the nonbinding, unenforceable and already unheeded treaty signed on Earth Day in 2016 - hoped to restrict warming to two degrees. The odds of succeeding, according to a recent study based on current emissions trends, are one in 20. If by some miracle we are able to limit warming to two degrees, we will only have to negotiate the extinction of the world's tropical reefs, sea-level rise of several meters and the abandonment of the Persian Gulf. The climate scientist James Hansen has called two-degree warming "a prescription for long-term disaster." Long-term disaster is now the best-case scenario. Three-degree warming is a prescription for short-term disaster: forests in the Arctic and the loss of most coastal cities. Robert Watson, a former director of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has argued that three-degree warming is the realistic minimum. Four degrees: Europe in permanent drought; vast areas of China, India and Bangladesh claimed by desert; Polynesia swallowed by the sea; the Colorado River thinned to a trickle; the American Southwest largely uninhabitable. The prospect of a five-degree warming has prompted some of the world's leading climate scientists to warn of the end of human civilization. Is it a comfort or a curse, the knowledge that we could have avoided all this?

Because in the decade that ran from 1979 to 1989, we had an excellent opportunity to solve the climate crisis. The world's major powers came within several signatures of endorsing a binding, global framework to reduce carbon emissions - far closer than we've come since. During those years, the conditions for success could not have been more favourable. The obstacles we blame for our current inaction had yet to emerge.

Almost nothing stood in our way - nothing except ourselves.

Nearly everything we understand about global warming was understood in 1979. By that year, data collected since 1957 confirmed what had been known since before the turn of the 20th century: Human beings have altered Earth's atmosphere through the indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels. The main scientific questions were settled beyond debate, and as the 1980s began, attention turned from diagnosis of the problem to refinement of the predicted consequences. Compared with string theory and genetic engineering, the "greenhouse effect" - a metaphor dating to the early 1900s - was ancient history, described in any Introduction to Biology textbook. Nor was the basic science especially complicated. It could be reduced to a simple axiom: The more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the warmer the planet. And every year, by burning coal, oil and gas, humankind belched increasingly obscene quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. (449 words)

3. Write a dialogue between two friends on any one of the following topics:
(a) Can teaching on digital platforms replace classroom teaching?

(b) Is translated literature inferior to original literature? (15)

4. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper on any one of the following topics:
(a) Without women's empowerment no society can progress.
(b) How to bring back normalcy in life after the pandemic attack of COVID 19. (15)

5. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions given: (3×5=15)

It's impossible to say for certain when the internet began, mainly because nobody can agree on what, precisely, the internet is. (This is only partly a philosophical question: it is also a matter of egos, since several of the people who made key contributions are anxious to claim the credit.) But 29 October 1969 - 40 years ago next week - has a strong claim for being, as Kleinrock puts it today, "the day the infant internet uttered its first words". At 10.30 pm, as Kleinrock's fellow professors and students crowded around, a computer was connected to the IMP, which made contact with a second IMP, attached to a second computer, several hundred miles away at the Stanford Research Institute, and an undergraduate named Charley Kline tapped out a message. Samuel Morse, sending the first telegraph message 125 years previously, chose the portentous phrase: "What hath God wrought?" But Kline's task was to log in remotely from Los Angeles to the Stanford machine, and there was no opportunity for portentousness: his instructions were to type the command LOGIN. To say that the rest is history is the emptiest of cliches - but trying to express the magnitude of what began that day, and what has happened in the decades since, is an undertaking that quickly exposes the limits of language. It's interesting to compare how much has changed in computing and the internet since 1969 with, say, how much has changed in world politics. Consider even the briefest summary of how much has happened on the global stage since 1969: the Vietnam war ended; the cold war escalated then declined; the Berlin Wall fell; communism collapsed; Islamic fundamentalism surged. And yet nothing has quite the power to make people in their 30s, 40s or 50s feel very old indeed as reflecting upon the growth of the internet and the world wide web. Twelve years after Charley Kline's first message on the Arpanet, as it was then known, there were still only 213 computers on the network; but 14 years after that, 16 million people were online, and email was beginning to change the world; the first really usable web browser wasn't launched until 1993, but by 1995 we had Amazon, by 1998 Google, and by 2001, Wikipedia, at which point there were 513 million people online. Today the figure is more like 1.7 billion.

(a) On which day did the internet first start functioning? What was it first called?
(b) Who typed the first message on the internet? What were the words? Which places were first connected via the internet?
(c) What was the first sentence that Morse had typed in? In which year was the telegraph introduced?
(d) What are the important political events the author mentions as having taken place since 1969?
(e) How many computers were connected by the internet in 1981?