Science & Technology · GS - III

The emergence of always-on AI agents represents a shift from conversational artificial intelligence towards autonomous task execution. Examine its potential applications and the challenges it poses for data privacy, accountability and human oversight.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 23/11/2026	GS - III	Science & Technology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Agentic AI, autonomous systems, multi-step task execution, productivity, data privacy, cybersecurity, algorithmic accountability, human oversight

Model Answer

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence is evolving from systems that primarily respond to individual prompts towards agentic systems capable of performing multi-step tasks. Always-on AI agents, such as OpenAI's Dots, represent this transition by enabling continuous task execution between user interactions.

Potential Applications

1. **Workplace productivity:** AI agents can assist with research, document preparation, project management and repetitive administrative tasks.

2. **Personal assistance:** They can organise schedules, track ongoing activities and coordinate tasks across connected applications.
3. **Business efficiency:** Organisations can use agents to automate workflows, improve customer support and support data-driven decisions.
4. **Scientific research:** AI agents can assist in information retrieval, data analysis and coordination of complex research workflows.

Major Challenges

1. **Data privacy:** Access to emails, files and connected applications increases the risk of exposing sensitive personal and organisational information.
2. **Cybersecurity:** Compromised accounts or malicious instructions may lead to unauthorised actions and data breaches.
3. **Accountability:** Determining responsibility for errors or harmful autonomous actions can become difficult.
4. **Human dependence:** Excessive reliance on automated systems may weaken independent judgement and critical thinking.
5. **Unequal access:** Advanced AI tools may widen the digital divide between technologically advanced and disadvantaged users.

Way Forward

1. Establish clear permission-based access and limits on autonomous actions.
2. Ensure human approval for sensitive or consequential operations.
3. Strengthen data protection, cybersecurity audits and transparency mechanisms.
4. Develop accountability standards and effective grievance redressal systems.
5. Promote AI literacy and equitable access to emerging technologies.

Conclusion

Always-on AI agents can enhance productivity and transform digital services, but their benefits depend on responsible deployment. A framework combining innovation, privacy protection, human oversight and accountability is essential for trustworthy agentic AI.