



ISSUE 6, MARCH

DHAIRYA TIMES

A quest for Horizon



IPS Abhishek Vashistha
UPSC, 2023

IPS Preeti Kumari
UPSC-RANK 130, 2022

DHAIRYA TIMES

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INTRODUCTION

In a world that's constantly evolving, Dhairya Times, a monthly magazine series presented by Dhairya - The Civil Services Society, seeks to be your trusted guide to navigating the crucial trends, headlines, opinions, stories and ideas shaping our lives everyday.

Our missions stands to providing a platform for peer learning, holistic development and an analytical point of views that push our horizons beyond to build a crucial analysis of ongoing issues.

From in-depth features and peer analysis to all the technical information, we dive deep into the topics that are transforming the global landscape, while also forging in as your go-to resource for understanding the forces shaping the world we are a part of.

As a Society , we thrive to assist students in their academic and professional pursuits. To achieve this, we have come across monthly Current Affairs magazine series, starting from October.

We hope the standpoint of Dhairya and Dhairya Times as a whole brings about the desired change in boosting your understanding of facts along with opinions so stated.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As we reflect on the journey of completing Magazine - *Dhairya Times* for the month of October, we are reminded that every step was made possible by the unwavering support and expertise of our esteemed Principal Ma'am , Prof. Saloni Gupta, whose vision has shaped our society's mission.

Followed by the significant encouragement of our mentor, IRS Rajesh Gupta sir, for his invaluable insights and expertise, inspiring our students to strive for excellence. Our gratitude also extends to our guest speakers, IPS Preeti Kumari and IPS Abhishek Vashishtha, for sharing their experiences and motivating our students.

We thank our Convenor Mr. Vimlok Tiwari, our Associate Teacher's of Dhairya, and Dhairya's Editorial Board Members for their tireless efforts in making our monthly magazine a reality. The due contribution has enabled in shaping this endeavour in ways that words can scarcely capture, providing a valuable resource for Civil Services Aspirants

Sincerely
Prerna Bhute
President

. Dhairya: The Civil Services Society



Prof. Saloni Gupta

Principal

Bharati College, University of Delhi

Hello my dear students.

I have always believed that your College is a place where three things are made viz. your career, your personality and your friends for life. Each one of these is very important and each one of you must explore all the avenues and opportunities available, towards each one of these payoffs from the college life.

Societies and clubs are platforms that often provide you with the wonderful confluence, if not congruence, of all three of these goals. They connect you to people with similar interests, they create opportunities for you to work in teams, they put you in positions of responsibility and leadership, they help you evolve as individuals and shape your personalities and, in their own intangible ways, they pave career paths for you by doing some or all of the above.

The Dhairya Society of our college is one such society that brings civil services aspirants of our college together and works towards supporting their goal of cracking this hallowed exam, conducted by the prestigious UPSC. Its a matter of great pride and satisfaction that the Dhairya society is bringing the first ever edition of its monthly magazine, aimed at sharing the vital information, tips and strategic advice for fellow aspirants.

I congratulate the office bearers and foot soldiers of this society and extend my best wishes to all our civil services aspirants.

Best wishes and best of luck.

IRS Rajesh Gupta



Greetings to the students of Bharati College in general and to the civil services aspirants connected via the platform of the Dhairya Society (Bharati College) in particular. It gives me immense pleasure to note that Dhairya society is doing commendable work in the field of peer learning, information dissemination and mutual self-help. Dhairya Times, its monthly magazine, is another step in that direction. I am glad to convey my congratulations and best wishes to all those who relate to the Dhairya Society and its meaningful endeavours.

I take this opportunity to give my perspective on the Role of Civil Servants, as a kind of a pep-talk to all you aspirants. As I see it, you as civil servants can help in bringing The Change that the society needs and probably the change that you also wish to see in your country, in the governance around you. This is a great platform that allows you to B the change you want to C. It is also an opportunity and a platform to serve the underprivileged masses and under-served sections. So, Being the Voice of the Voiceless is another role that can and should inspire the youth in our colleges towards this exam/job. This job also allows you to become Self-made and Empowered. **ANYONE CAN BECOME** a civil servant with the right combo of intelligence, diligence, motivation and strategy. So, if you come from humble backgrounds or from a weaker section/gender/class - this is The Job that can empower you and you, in-turn, can empower thousands and lakhs of common people. Be driven by that, be fired by that!

Make no mistakes though, this is a tough exam and so it should be too, for it gets you **THE TOP JOBS** in the country. But hey, when the going gets tough, the tough gets going. So, tell yourself "I'm willing to suffer today, for a better tomorrow". They say those who sweat in peace, don't have to bleed in war. So, prepare yourselves adequately for this war - with the right arsenal, the right strategy, the right work ethics and the right attitude. This exam is tough, but not as tough as it is often made out to be. Dream big, create commensurate processes, believe in your processes and believe in yourself! If your processes are right, the results are bound to be right - sooner or later, in fact sooner rather than later!

Finally, I'll tell you what a teacher of mine at SRCC, my alma mater, had told everyone in our passing out batch - make sure you get what you like, else you'll have to like what you get.

Best of luck.

Jai Hind!

Words That Matter

IPS Preeti Kumari



In J. R. R. Tolkein's *The Lord Of The Rings*, when the protagonist Frodo Baggins sets out for Mount Doom, he whispers, "But I do not know the way." He has taken up a monumental goal, unaware of how he can achieve it. He doesn't know the way, yet he steps forward, embracing a journey brimming with challenges he can scarcely foresee.

When I began college at the University of Delhi, I, too, glimpsed my own "Mount Doom," yet I also knew that "I do not know the way." Through the wrong turns and the right ones, along paths crowded or deserted, I navigated my own adventure with the UPSC Civil Services Exam. And an adventure it has been—filled with trials and triumphs, persistence and satisfaction. If you choose Civil Services, I invite you to see it as I have: a challenging adventure, both arduous and exhilarating.

The journey truly begins when you hear that inner voice, that unmistakable call telling you why this goal matters to you. For if your "why" is clear, the "how" will gradually appear, guiding you step by step. That's how it is in life.

College is a time to tune into this inner voice, to find your inner compass. As you navigate independence and adulthood, you'll begin to ask: Are my dreams truly mine, or the echoes of others' expectations? Here, where your interests, talents, and ambitions converge, you'll start discerning what you're truly drawn to. This self-discovery is the most vital gift college can offer.

To fully unravel this path, don't limit yourself to textbooks or UPSC guides alone—that would be a disservice to yourself. You have the intellect to master what's in these books when you will write the exam, but life will demand more from you than academic knowledge. It will call for resilience when the journey gets tough. This is where life skills, patience, and emotional fortitude are essential; they keep you from faltering on steep climbs.

So, as you pursue this dream, equip yourself with skills that will help you excel: think critically, write persuasively, see issues from multiple angles, and learn to engage with people from a space of respect and humility. Let your values align with the Constitution of India, respecting laws and principles that shape our society. You'll need persistence, patience, dedication, and a singular focus to give this journey your best.

College is the perfect arena to build these skills—through extracurriculars, leadership roles, and creative pursuits. Academics alone won't cut it. In every field, what's needed is dynamism, adaptability, and creativity.

Specifically for the exam, I spent my college days reading newspapers, studying the UPSC CSE syllabus, past year questions, and polishing my thinking and writing skills for the exam. I never limited myself to mere academics and was active in extracurriculars as well. Whenever I could, I also participated in essay competitions, honing my writing skills until I began to win. You can do the same; start by summarizing editorials or articles, sharpening both language and thought.

When choosing electives in every semester, consider those connected to the UPSC syllabus—they'll deepen your knowledge. And if certain subjects seem daunting, approach them creatively. If history feels intimidating, pick up one of William Dalrymple's books and discover the wonder within. Remember, this exam demands a grasp of every subject's role in the larger world. A civil servant must know the basics of space technology as well as the richness of ancient Indian history. Embrace the syllabus as a doorway to knowledge, and soon you'll be captivated by the world's it opens for you.

Once you've set foot in this world, there's no turning back. Until then, dream boldly, for college will be among the most transformative years of your life. Pursue your passions, read widely, explore new places with friends, and grow into the best version of yourself.

If you can dream it, you can achieve it. But it will require you to seize each day, or as John Keating urges in *Dead Poets Society*: "Carpe Diem!"

Words That Matter



IPS Abhishek Vashishtha

Dear Aspirants of Bharti College,

This is Abhishek Vashishtha, IPS, reaching out to commend your dedication to the noble journey of civil services preparation. Remember, success in this path demands discipline, consistency, and a vision to serve our nation. Every challenge you face is an opportunity to grow stronger, and every failure a step closer to success. Stay focused, make your preparation holistic, and never underestimate the power of self-belief. The nation awaits leaders like you to bring about positive change. Wishing you all the very best for your future endeavors. Keep striving and shine bright!

Warm regards,

Abhishek Vashishtha, IPS



IPS Navneet Anand

Dear Aspirants of Bharti College,

I know how it feels to succeed after years of handwork and i also know how it feels to fail after giving your best effort. I know it is never easy to assume that you have all that it takes to crack this exam. You actually don't have to trust in your full potential now, you only need to trust the small little actions you will take in next couple of minutes or next hour. Those little blocks of action will take you on a long journey where believing in your own potential will be the only option you will have and you will do that happily. And this is where the results will come. So take action , and those small steps will put you ahead for the next mental step! That is to continue pursuing your tasks even when you don't feel like doing it. Worship the process. The process is the biggest teacher we could ever have.

**Warm regards,
Navneet Anand, IPS**

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MARCH



Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

March 1, 2025

"India and EU Aim to Finalize Trade Agreement Amid Global Challenges"

India and the European Union are working towards finalizing a trade agreement within the year to strengthen economic ties and address global economic challenges.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Uttarakhand Avalanche: Rescue Operations Continue as 22 Remain Missing"

An avalanche in Uttarakhand led to the rescue of 33 individuals, while search efforts continue for 22 others still missing.

GS Paper 1 – Geography

"Supreme Court to Hear Plea on Electoral Bonds Data Disclosure"

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea seeking the disclosure of data related to electoral bonds, raising questions about transparency in political funding.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

March 2, 2025

"French Foreign Minister Proposes Month-Long Truce in Ukraine"

France's Foreign Minister suggested a month-long truce in Ukraine to test Russia's commitment to peace negotiations.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Home Minister Directs Unrestricted Movement on Manipur Roads from March 8"

Home Minister Amit Shah has instructed authorities to ensure free movement on Manipur roads starting March 8, aiming to restore regional normalcy.

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

"RBI Flags Concerns Over Rising NPAs in MSME Sector"

The Reserve Bank of India has expressed concerns over the increasing non-performing assets in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises sector, highlighting potential risks to financial stability.

GS Paper 3 – Economy

March 3, 2025

"US Suspends Military Aid to Ukraine Amid Frustrations with Zelenskyy"

President Donald Trump ordered an indefinite pause on all U.S. military aid to Ukraine, citing dissatisfaction with President Zelenskyy's commitment to peace negotiations with Russia.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

1 March

**Zero Discrimination Day,
World Civil Defence Day**

ACHIEVEMENT

On March 3, Navratna status has been granted to two public sector companies-Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) by the central government.

3 March

World Wildlife Day, World Hearing Day

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Mayawati Removes Nephew from Party Position, Declares No Successor Yet"

BSP leader Mayawati has dismissed her nephew from party roles, stating that no successor will be named during her lifetime.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

"Western Ghats Panel Submits Report on Landslide Mitigation Strategies"

A panel focusing on the Western Ghats has submitted a report outlining strategies for mitigating landslides in the ecologically sensitive region.

GS Paper 3 – Environment

March 4, 2025

"UK and France Lead 'Coalition of the Willing' for Ukraine Peace Plan"

The UK and France announced a coalition to provide security guarantees to Ukraine and facilitate peace negotiations with Russia.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"ISRO Prepares for Gaganyaan's Unmanned Test Flight"

The Indian Space Research Organisation is gearing up for the unmanned test flight of the Gaganyaan mission, marking a significant step in India's human spaceflight program.

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology

"Election Commission to Remove All Duplicate Voter ID Numbers"

The Election Commission has initiated a drive to eliminate duplicate voter ID numbers to ensure fair and transparent elections.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

March 5, 2025

"US Pauses Intelligence Sharing with Ukraine to Pressure Peace Negotiations"

The United States has paused intelligence-sharing with Ukraine, increasing pressure on President Zelenskyy to negotiate peace with Russia.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Minister Emphasizes Trust as Foundation of Effective Governance"

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted that building trust between the government and citizens is essential for effective governance.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

ACHIEVEMENT

An official order issued by the Personnel Ministry confirmed that Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), has been appointed as the new Finance Secretary of India.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Prime Minister Urges Industry to Position India as Reliable Global Partner"

The Prime Minister emphasized the need for India's industry to actively participate in global markets, positioning the country as a dependable international partner.

GS Paper 3 – Economy

March 6, 2025

"India Condemns Breach of Jaishankar's Security in UK"

India expressed strong disapproval over a security breach involving External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during his visit to the United Kingdom, summoning the British diplomat to lodge a formal protest.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"China Enhances Ties with Bangladesh Through Loan Repayment Extensions"

China has strengthened its relationship with Bangladesh by extending loan repayment periods and offering duty-free access to various products, aiming to bolster economic cooperation between the two nations.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Comprehensive Space Policy to Be Unveiled Within Three Months: Fadnavis"

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that a comprehensive space policy is set to be introduced within the next three months, focusing on advancing India's capabilities in the space sector.

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology

March 7, 2025

"India and Ireland to Establish Joint Economic Commission"

India and Ireland have agreed to set up a Joint Economic Commission to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation, reflecting a commitment to deepen ties between the two countries.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"All-Women Crew to Operate Vande Bharat Train on International Women's Day"

In a significant move towards gender inclusivity, an all-women crew is scheduled to run the Vande Bharat train from Mumbai's CSMT to Shirdi on International Women's Day, showcasing women's empowerment in the railway sector.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

Achievements

India has developed its first indigenous Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine.

It will be installed at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi by October.

The main aim is to reduce treatment costs and reliance on imported medical devices.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

March 8, 2025

"India Supports Mauritius on Chagos Islands Sovereignty Issue"

Ahead of Prime Minister Modi's visit, India has expressed support for Mauritius regarding the sovereignty dispute over the Chagos Islands, aligning with Mauritius's stance on the matter.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Surge in Cricket Bat Sales in Pune Amid Champions Trophy Fever"

Pune has witnessed a significant increase in cricket bat sales as excitement builds for the ICC Champions Trophy, reflecting the sport's deep-rooted popularity in the region.

GS Paper 3 – Economy

"Chargesheet Filed Against Social Media Handle for Pro-Terrorist Content"

Authorities have filed a chargesheet against a social media account accused of disseminating secessionist and pro-terrorist content, highlighting ongoing efforts to combat online extremism.

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

March 9, 2025

"India Clinches Third Champions Trophy Title, Defeating New Zealand"

The Indian cricket team secured its third Champions Trophy title by defeating New Zealand, marking a significant achievement in international sports.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Tensions Rise in Manipur's Kuki-Dominated Areas Amid Protests"

Protests and enforced shutdowns have escalated tensions in Manipur's Kuki-dominated regions, indicating underlying socio-political unrest in the area.

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

"Israel Reduces Electricity Supply to Gaza Amid Ceasefire Standoff"

In the midst of a ceasefire standoff, Israel has cut electricity supplies to Gaza, exacerbating humanitarian concerns in the region.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

March 10, 2025

"PM Modi Heads to Mauritius for Talks on Maritime Security and Financial Crimes"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Mauritius to discuss agreements focusing on maritime security and combating financial crimes, aiming to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

8 March

International Women's Day

Achievements

India's wheat procurement commenced robustly, with 2.08 million metric tons acquired since March 15, marking a 44.4% increase compared to the same period last year. This surge indicates a strong harvest, expected to replenish the nation's wheat reserves and reduce import dependencies.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Agriculture Ministry Seeks Increased Funds for Farmers' Registry and Digital Crop Survey"

The Agriculture Ministry has requested additional funding to enhance the farmers' registry and conduct a digital crop survey, aiming to modernize agricultural data collection and support.

GS Paper 3 – Agriculture

"Delhi Government to Deploy Yamuna Task Force to Protect Floodplains"

In collaboration with the Territorial Army, the Delhi government plans to deploy the Yamuna Task Force to safeguard floodplains and curb encroachment, emphasizing environmental conservation efforts.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

March 11, 2025

"Greenlanders Vote Amid Trump's Control Pledge"

Greenland conducted elections dominated by discussions on former U.S. President Donald Trump's pledge to assert control over the territory, raising concerns about sovereignty and international relations.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Israel Agrees to Talks on Lebanon Border, Frees Five Lebanese"

Israel consented to negotiations concerning its border with Lebanon and released five Lebanese nationals, signaling potential progress in Middle East diplomacy.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Mauritian PM Seeks Indian Investment, Calls It 'Vital' for Economic Growth"

Mauritius' Prime Minister emphasized the importance of Indian investments for the nation's economic development during bilateral discussions.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

March 12, 2025

"Trump Administration Claws Back \$20 Billion in Climate Funds"

The U.S. administration retracted the \$20 billion allocated for climate initiatives, impacting global environmental funding and cooperation.

GS Paper 3 – Environment

"Kerala CM Pinarayi Hosts FM Sitharaman for Breakfast Meeting"

Kerala's Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan hosted Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, discussing state and central financial collaborations.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

10 March

CISF Raising Day

Achievements

Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey has been appointed as the 11th Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in February 2025.

It was established on 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was granted statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Mauritius' New Leadership Meets PM Modi, Strengthening Ties"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi engaged with Mauritius' new leadership to bolster bilateral relations and cooperation.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

March 13, 2025

"Trump Administration's Mass Layoffs Blocked by Federal Judges"

Federal judges in California and Maryland halted mass layoffs planned by the Trump administration, citing legal concerns.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"All England Open: Lakshya Sen Defeats Defending Champ Jonatan Christie"

Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen showcased a strong performance by defeating defending champion Jonatan Christie at the All-England Open.

GS Paper 2 – Sports

"India, Bangladesh Conduct Naval Exercise in the Bay of Bengal"

India and Bangladesh conducted a joint naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal to enhance interoperability and maritime security.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

March 14, 2025

"Russia Offers Safety to Ukrainian Troops in Kursk if Kyiv Surrenders: Putin"

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Ukrainian troops in Kursk would be guaranteed safety if Kyiv agreed to surrender, following an appeal from former U.S. President Trump.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"US Aligns with G7, Urges Russia to Accept Ukraine Ceasefire"

The United States, in alignment with G7 nations, called on Russia to accept a ceasefire in Ukraine to de-escalate tensions.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"China to Host SCO Defence Officials Meet to Discuss Security Cooperation"

China announced plans to host a meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) defense officials to discuss future security cooperation among member states.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Achievements

India-UK Free Trade Agreement Progress: India and the United Kingdom reached consensus on 90% of a free trade agreement, aiming for finalization later this year. The agreement encompasses key economic sectors and is anticipated to lead to substantial tariff reductions on UK exports to India, including Scotch whisky and automobiles.

14 March

International Day of Action for Rivers

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

March 15, 2025

"Trump Administration Weighs Expanding Travel Ban to 41 Countries"

- The Trump administration considered expanding its travel ban to include 41 additional countries, impacting international mobility and diplomacy.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"US Senate Passes Six-Month Spending Bill, Avoiding Government Shutdown"

- The U.S. Senate approved a six-month spending bill, preventing a potential government shutdown and ensuring continued federal operations.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"India Rejects Pakistan's Charge on Terror, Says 'Look Inward'"

- India dismissed Pakistan's allegations regarding terrorism, urging Pakistan to introspect and address internal issues.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

March 16, 2025

"Plans to fence its entire border with Myanmar in 10 years"

- India will fully fence the Myanmar border to curb insurgency, illegal immigration, and smuggling. The 10-year plan includes advanced surveillance and controlled crossing points with biometric systems.

(GS Paper 3 – Internal Security)

"US planning visa curbs on 41 nations"

- The US is considering visa restrictions on 41 nations over security concerns. This includes full bans, partial suspensions, and enhanced vetting, impacting global mobility and diplomatic relations.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"SpaceX launches new crew to replace NASA's stranded astronauts at the ISS"

- SpaceX launched a new ISS crew to relieve astronauts delayed by Boeing Starliner issues. It highlights private sector space reliability and US dependency diversification in space missions.

(GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology)

15 March

World
Consumer
Rights Day

16 March

National
Vaccination
Day

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Anthropologists call for overhaul of criteria used for identifying STs"

- Experts suggest revising ST identification criteria from rigid classification to a traits-based spectrum, aiming for more accurate tribal representation and inclusion in welfare schemes and constitutional benefits.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

March 17, 2025

"U.S. strikes on Yemen kill 31; Houthis hit back"

- The U.S. conducted airstrikes on Yemen, killing 31 people, in response to Houthi attacks on international shipping. The Houthis retaliated with missile and drone attacks, escalating tensions in the region.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"Chandrayaan-5 approved; will carry 250-kg rover, says ISRO chief"

- ISRO announced government approval for Chandrayaan-5, a joint mission with Japan, featuring a 250-kg lunar rover for advanced lunar exploration

(GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology)

"Opposition to press government for discussion on 'duplicate' EPIC numbers, delimitation"

- Opposition parties demand parliamentary debate on issues of duplicate voter ID cards (EPIC) and electoral delimitation, citing concerns over electoral integrity.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

"India, New Zealand resume trade deal talks after decade"

- After a ten-year hiatus, India and New Zealand have restarted negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement to enhance bilateral economic ties.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 18, 2025

"India's goods trade deficit at 42-month low following dip in gold, crude imports"

In February 2025, India's trade deficit narrowed to \$14.05 billion, the lowest in 42 months, due to significant declines in gold and crude oil imports.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

ACHIEVEMENT

Assam state government has announced plans to launch its own satellite, ASSAMSAT, to bolster data access for crucial socio economic initiatives and enhance border security.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"India and New Zealand to institutionalize defense, security ties, says Modi"

- India and New Zealand signed a pact to strengthen defense and security cooperation, aiming for a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"China welcomes Modi's comments, points to 2,000-year history of bilateral exchanges"

- China appreciated Prime Minister Modi's positive remarks on India-China relations, highlighting over 2,000 years of friendly exchanges and mutual learning between the two nations.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"India and Australia agree to deepen cooperation across maritime, land, air domains"

- During the 9th Defence Policy Talks, India and Australia agreed to enhance cooperation and interoperability across maritime, land, and air domains, including collaboration with multilateral partners.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"SC to examine petition on CAG appointment process"

- The Supreme Court agreed to hear a petition challenging the executive's exclusive authority in appointing the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), seeking a more transparent selection process.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

March 19, 2025

"Israeli air strikes across Gaza Strip kill over 400 Palestinians"

Israeli airstrikes in Gaza resulted in over 400 Palestinian deaths, escalating tensions and raising international concerns over the humanitarian impact

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"SC to consider if Lokpal has jurisdiction over judges"

The Supreme Court will examine whether the Lokpal can investigate complaints against sitting High Court judges, addressing concerns about judicial independence and accountability

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and governance)

ACHIEVEMENT

According to the 19th Wealth Report 2025, India has emerged as the fourth largest global wealth hub in the world after the United States of America, China, and Japan.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Pact signed for using Parliament data for AI model: Minister"

- The government signed an agreement to utilize parliamentary data for developing AI models, aiming to enhance legislative processes and public policy analysis.

(GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology)

"Right to development a priority under fundamental rights"

- The government emphasized prioritizing the right to development within fundamental rights, focusing on inclusive growth and equitable resource distribution.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

March 20, 2025

"SC to hear pleas on EC appointment law on April 16"

- The Supreme Court schedules April 16 to hear petitions challenging the 2023 law on appointing the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

"Cabinet approves ₹1,500-crore UPI incentive to banks"

- The Union Cabinet approves a ₹1,500 crore scheme to promote low-value BHIM-UPI transactions, incentivizing banks to encourage digital payments among small merchants.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

"SC flags contradiction between States' claims of high per capita income and people living in poverty"

- The Supreme Court questions the disparity between states reporting high per capita income yet having significant populations below the poverty line, seeking clarification on assessment criteria

(GS Paper 2 – Social Justice)

"V-P criticizes freebies, calls for policy on efficient use of govt. investments"

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar urges a national debate on freebies, advocating for a structured policy to ensure efficient utilization of government investments for public welfare.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

20 March

International Day of Happiness

ACHIEVEMENT

The Indian government has given the green signal to the ambitious Chandrayaan-5 mission, which will prove to be a major achievement in moon-related exploration.

This mission will be conducted in collaboration with Japan.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

March 21, 2025

“Centre promises consultations, impact study for mining project off Kerala coast”

- The Centre assures environmental impact assessments and public consultations before proceeding with seabed mining off Kerala's coast, addressing local concerns over ecological and livelihood risks

(GS Paper 3 – Environment)

“Army seeks inclusion of additional areas in Manipur under AFSPA”

- The Indian Army requests extending AFSPA to more Manipur regions amid rising insurgency, aiming for operational freedom, sparking debate on human rights and governance.

(GS Paper 3 – Internal Security)

“Amid militarisation concerns, India remains a stabilising factor in the Arctic: Russian envoy”

- The Russian envoy lauds India's peaceful Arctic engagement, emphasizing it as a stabilizing force amid growing Western militarization in the ecologically sensitive region.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

“Believe India will cut tariffs substantially on U.S. goods: Trump”

- Donald Trump expressed optimism that India will reduce import tariffs on U.S. products if he returns to presidency, hinting at potential trade negotiations.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 22, 2025

“India, Malaysia plan counter-terrorism exercises for 2026”

India and Malaysia, co-chairs of ASEAN's Counter-Terrorism Experts Working Group, announced a Table-Top Exercise in Malaysia (2026) and a Field Training Exercise in India (2027).

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

“Civil society groups call on govt. to not water down RTI Act”

Over 30 civil society organizations urged the government to refrain from amending the RTI Act, citing concerns over reduced public accountability and transparency.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

21 March

World Forestry Day
World Poetry Day

ACHIEVEMENT

The 24th World Sustainable Development Summit 2025 concluded in New Delhi on 7th March 2025.

The World Sustainable Development Summit 2025 was organized by "The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)."

22 March

World Water Day

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

“India and New Zealand stand to benefit from greater collaboration”

- India and New Zealand agreed to revive free trade negotiations after a decade, aiming to enhance cooperation in defense, trade, and education sectors

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

“India's \$23-bn plan to rival China factories to lapse after it disappoints”

- India's \$23 billion Production-Linked Incentive scheme will lapse after failing to meet targets, with only \$1.73 billion disbursed and manufacturing's GDP share declining.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

March 23, 2025

“Citizens losing trust in judiciary, says former CJI”

- Former Chief Justice of India, N.V. Ramana, expressed concern over declining public trust in the judiciary, emphasizing the need for transparency and timely justice.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

“Israel targets Hezbollah in heaviest strike in Lebanon since ceasefire”

- Israel conducted its most intense strikes on Lebanon since the ceasefire, targeting Hezbollah positions in response to rocket attacks

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

“Why is uploading voting data a challenge?”

- Challenges in uploading voting data stem from technical glitches, cybersecurity concerns, and ensuring real-time accuracy, impacting electoral transparency and public confidence.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

“Indo-France naval exercise off Goa focuses on anti-submarine warfare”

- India and France conducted the 'Varuna 2025' naval exercise off Goa, emphasizing anti-submarine warfare to enhance maritime cooperation and interoperability

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

23 March

World Meteorological Day

ACHIEVEMENT

Indore will become the first city in India to establish a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model-based green waste processing plant.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

March 24, 2025

“CJI seeks details of guards at judge's home”

- Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna requested information on security personnel assigned to Justice Yashwant Varma's residence amid an ongoing inquiry into undisclosed cash found there

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

“India imposes anti-dumping duty on Chinese goods for up to 5 years”

- To protect domestic industries, India imposed anti-dumping duties on Chinese products, including vacuum flasks and aluminium foil, for up to five years.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

“US tariffs looming, India looks at easing non-trade barriers, relaxing Chinese FDI”

- Facing impending U.S. tariffs, India considers easing non-trade barriers and relaxing restrictions on Chinese foreign direct investment to balance trade relations.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

“13th Edition of India-Italy Military Cooperation Group Meeting concludes in Rome”

- India and Italy concluded their 13th Military Cooperation Group meeting in Rome, enhancing bilateral defense collaboration and strategic partnership.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 25, 2025

“Govt. notifies 24% pay hike for MPs from April 2023”

The central government has approved a 24% salary increase for Members of Parliament, raising their monthly pay from ₹1 lakh to ₹1.24 lakh, effective April 1, 2023

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

“Centre issues guidelines to tackle high rate of job card deletions under MGNREGS”

The Ministry of Rural Development issued guidelines mandating Gram Sabha approval for deleting MGNREGS job cards, ensuring transparency and due process

(GS Paper 2 – Social Justice)

“Govt. moots abolishing digital tax on online advertisements from April 1”

The government plans to abolish the 6% equalisation levy on online advertisements starting April 1, 2025, aiming to align with global tax norms and ease business operations.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

24 March

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day

ACHIEVEMENT

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced that Madhav National Park of Madhya Pradesh has become the country's 58th tiger reserve. It is also the 9th Tiger Reserve in the Madhya Pradesh.

Madhav National Park is located in the Shivpuri district of the Chambal region.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

“US-Russia talks begin in Saudi Arabia about Ukraine war, focus on Black Sea ceasefire”

- US and Russian officials commenced discussions in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, aiming to negotiate a Black Sea ceasefire in the ongoing Ukraine conflict

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 26, 2025

“Govt., Opposition call for collegium system reform”

- Both government and opposition parties advocate for reforms in the judicial collegium system to enhance transparency and efficiency in judicial appointments.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

“Centre drops import duty on goods used to make EV, phone batteries; Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill”

- The government exempts import duties on 35 EV battery components and 28 mobile phone parts to boost domestic manufacturing; Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill 2025

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

“Parliament passes Bill to replace Boilers Act”

- Parliament approves the Boilers Bill 2024, replacing the 1923 Act, aiming to enhance safety, decriminalize minor offences, and streamline boiler regulations.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

“No reciprocal tariffs imposed by the U.S. on India, says Centre”

- The Indian government clarifies that the U.S. has not imposed reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods, amid ongoing trade discussions

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 27, 2025

“SC stays HC’s ‘inhuman’ remarks on rape bid”

The Supreme Court stayed the Allahabad High Court's ruling that deemed certain acts insufficient for an attempted rape charge, criticizing it as "insensitive and inhuman."

(GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance)

ACHIEVEMENT

The SourceX India is the country's first Global Market Place that brings together the global buyers and the Indian companies and provides an opportunity to launch successful Indian brands in the international markets.

The 3rd edition of the SourceX India is being held at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi, from 26-28 March 2025.

27 March

World Theatre Day

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"India, China discuss ways to move ties to 'predictable path'"

- Indian and Chinese officials met to explore step-by-step resumption of dialogue, aiming to stabilize and make bilateral relations more predictable.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"Non-performing assets of banks at multi-year low due to govt. measures, says Sitharaman"

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reported that gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) of scheduled commercial banks have declined to a multi-year low of 2.5% as of September 2024.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

"India must be a reliable trade partner to compete in the EV space"

- To enhance competitiveness in the electric vehicle sector, India needs to establish itself as a dependable trade partner, fostering trust and collaboration internationally

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

March 28, 2025

"SAHYOG must adhere to the safeguards and procedures in Section 69A of IT Act:

- The government emphasizes that the SAHYOG platform must comply with Section 69A of the IT Act, ensuring lawful online content blocking procedures.

(GS Paper 3 – Cyber Security)

"U.S. defence ties — India needs to keep its eyes open"

- Analysts advise India to cautiously navigate its defense partnership with the U.S., balancing strategic autonomy while enhancing military cooperation amid evolving geopolitical dynamics.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"House panel tells Centre to give more funds to States to implement NEP"

- A parliamentary committee recommends increased central funding to states for effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

ACHIEVEMENT

The Punjab government has announced that it will develop the Jhajjar-Bachauli Wildlife Sanctuary as a leopard safari destination to promote eco-tourism in the state.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"Union government to help States procure pulses at MSP: Agriculture Minister"

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announces central support for states to procure pulses at Minimum Support Prices, aiming to boost production and reduce imports.

(GS Paper 3 – Agriculture)

March 29, 2025

"Cabinet increases DA, DR for Central staff and pensioners"

- The Union Cabinet approved a 2% hike in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for central government employees and pensioners, effective from January 1, 2025

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

"Data Protection Act sections undermine RTI legislation: Moitra"

- MP Mahua Moitra raised concerns that Section 44(3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act overrides Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, potentially limiting information disclosure

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

"Govt. passes Bill to simplify maritime regulations"

- The Lok Sabha passed the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, replacing the 1925 Act to modernize maritime laws and align them with international conventions.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

"PM promises assistance to Myanmar and Thailand"

- Following a 7.7-magnitude earthquake affecting Myanmar and Thailand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged India's support for relief and rehabilitation efforts.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 30, 2025

"ISRO achieves breakthrough in semi cryogenic engine development for LVM"

- ISRO successfully conducted the first hot test of the 2000 kN semi cryogenic engine's Power Head Test Article, advancing the LVM3 launch vehicle's development.

(GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology)

Achievements

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the National Conference on Environment held at the Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on 29th March 2025.

The National Conference on Environment focuses on the legal aspect of Environmental laws and their proper implementation.

Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

"India-Europe Resilience Forum aims to boost strategic digital collaboration"

- The India-Europe Resilience Forum was launched to enhance cooperation on geoeconomics, supply chain resilience, climate adaptation, sustainability, technology, and inclusive development between policymakers, think tanks, and academia.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"Why has X sued the government over Sahyog?"

- X filed a lawsuit against the Indian government, alleging that the Sahyog portal unlawfully expands censorship powers by allowing officials to bypass judicial oversight for content removal.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

"'Operation Brahma' kicks off: PM Modi reaches out to junta"

- India launched 'Operation Brahma' to provide humanitarian aid, including search and rescue operations, to Myanmar following a devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

March 31, 2025

"U.S. carries out strike against IS in Somalia"

- The U.S. military conducted an airstrike in Puntland, Somalia, targeting ISIS operatives, resulting in multiple enemy combatants killed and no civilian casualties

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"Trump threatens Iran: 'Make a nuclear deal or there will be bombing'."

- President Trump warned Iran of potential bombing and secondary tariffs if a new nuclear agreement isn't reached, following Iran's rejection of direct talks.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

"Status of the SpaceX Mars mission"

SpaceX plans uncrewed Starship missions to Mars by 2026, focusing on landing reliability; crewed missions may follow within approximately four years.

(GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology)

Achievements

India on Saturday (March 29, 2025) delivered 15 tonnes of relief material to Myanmar under its 'Operation Brahma', which was launched after a powerful earthquake struck the neighbouring country as well as Thailand.

The supplies included tents, sleeping bags, blankets, ready-to-eat meals, water purifiers, solar lamps, generator sets and essential medicines.

FOCUS
ON
THE
OF



Focus of the month

ISRO'S ADITYA L1 MISSION

Introduction

The Aditya L1 mission is a solar mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) aimed at studying the Sun's corona and its impact on the Earth's climate. The mission is named after the Hindu god of the Sun, Aditya, and L1 refers to the Lagrange point 1, a location in space where the gravitational forces of the Sun and Earth are balanced.

Objectives of the Mission

The Aditya L1 mission aims to study the solar corona, solar magnetic storms, and their impact on the environment around the Earth. The mission's objectives include understanding coronal heating, the physics of partially ionized plasma, and the initiation of coronal mass ejections.

Current Status

The Aditya L1 spacecraft was successfully launched on September 2, 2023, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, India. The spacecraft has completed several orbit raising maneuvers to reach its final destination, the halo orbit around the L1 point.

Recent Developments

Recent developments in the Aditya L1 mission include:

1. Successful Deployment of Magnetometer Boom:

The successful deployment of a 6-meter magnetometer boom aboard the spacecraft.

2. Observation of Powerful Flare:

The observation of a powerful flare erupt from the Sun from its vantage point.

3. Insertion into Halo Orbit:

The spacecraft has also been inserted into a halo orbit around the first Earth-Sun Lagrange Point.

Scientific Payloads

The Aditya L1 spacecraft carries several scientific payloads, including:

1. Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC):

Developed by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, to study the Sun's corona..

2. Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT):

Developed by the Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune, to study the solar spectral radiation in the ultraviolet range.

3. Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS):

Designed to continuously measure the solar soft X-ray flux from the Sun-Earth Lagrangian point L1.

Significance of the Mission

The Aditya L1 mission is significant for:

1. Understanding the Sun's Impact on the Earth's Climate:

Understanding the Sun's impact on the Earth's climate and how it affects the planet's temperature and weather patterns.

2. Demonstrating Advanced Space Technologies:

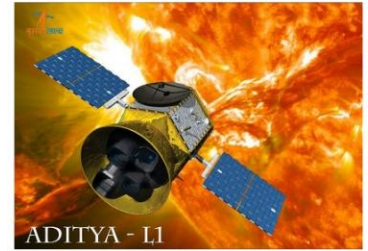
Demonstrating advanced space technologies, including the use of a coronagraph to study the Sun's corona.

3. Enhancing India's Space Exploration Capabilities:

Enhancing India's space exploration capabilities and demonstrating the country's capabilities in space research and development.

Mission Timeline

The Aditya L1 mission was launched on September 2, 2023, and has a planned duration of 5.2 years. The spacecraft has completed several orbit raising maneuvers and has been inserted into a halo orbit around the first Earth-Sun Lagrange Point.



Key Features of the Mission

Some key features of the Aditya L1 mission include:

1. Studying the Solar Corona:

Studying the solar corona and its impact on the Earth's climate.

2. Understanding Coronal Mass Ejections:

Understanding coronal mass ejections and their impact on the environment around the Earth.

3. Monitoring Solar Wind:

Monitoring solar wind and its impact on the Earth's magnetic field.

Conclusion

The Aditya L1 mission is a significant step forward in India's space exploration program, and it has the potential to provide valuable insights into the Sun's corona and its impact on the Earth's climate. The mission's success will depend on the performance of the spacecraft and its payloads, as well as the accuracy of its scientific instruments.

Focus of the month

INDIA'S AI AMBITIONS

Introduction

India has been rapidly emerging as a major player in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), with the government and private sector investing heavily in AI research and development. The country's AI ambitions are driven by its vast population, growing economy, and increasing demand for innovative solutions to address complex problems.

India's AI Vision

The Indian government has laid out a comprehensive vision for AI development, focusing on:

1. Inclusive Growth:

Using AI to promote inclusive growth and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

2. Innovation:

Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in the AI sector.

3. Global Leadership:

Positioning India as a global leader in AI research and development.

Key Initiatives

Some key initiatives driving India's AI ambitions include:

1. National AI Strategy:

The government has launched a national AI strategy to promote AI research and development.

2. AI Research Institutes:

Several AI research institutes have been established to focus on specific areas such as healthcare, education, and agriculture.

3. Startup Ecosystem:

A thriving startup ecosystem is promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in the AI sector.

Applications of AI in India

AI is being applied in various sectors in India, including:

1. Healthcare:

AI is being used to improve healthcare outcomes, including disease diagnosis and treatment.

2. Education:

AI is being used to personalize education and improve learning outcomes.

3. Agriculture:

AI is being used to improve crop yields and reduce waste.

Current News

Some recent developments in India's AI landscape include:

1. Google's AI Research Center:

Google has announced plans to establish an AI research center in India.

2. Microsoft's AI for India Initiative:

Microsoft has launched an AI for India initiative to promote AI adoption in the country.

3. India's AI Startups:

India's AI startups are attracting significant investment and attention globally.

Factual Data

Some key statistics highlighting India's AI ambitions include:

1. AI Market Size:

India's AI market is expected to reach \$15 billion by 2025.

2. AI Adoption:

70% of Indian businesses plan to adopt AI in the next two years.

3. AI Research:

India is ranked 10th globally in terms of AI research output.

Challenges and Opportunities

While India's AI ambitions are promising, there are several challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed, including:

1. Data Quality:

Ensuring the quality and availability of data for AI applications.



2. Talent Development:

Developing a skilled workforce to support AI research and development.

3. Regulatory Framework:

Establishing a regulatory framework to govern the use of AI.

Conclusion

India's AI ambitions are driven by its vast population, growing economy, and increasing demand for innovative solutions. With a comprehensive vision, key initiatives, and applications in various sectors, India is poised to become a major player in the global AI landscape.

Focus of the month

TANTRIC BUDDHISM

Introduction

Tantric Buddhism, also known as Vajrayana Buddhism, is a unique spiritual tradition that emphasizes esoteric rituals, mantras, and meditation practices to attain enlightenment. This tradition emerged in India around the 6th-7th century CE and spread to various parts of Asia, including Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Why in News?

Tantric Buddhism has gained attention recently due to:

- UNESCO recognition of certain Himalayan monastic rituals and art forms rooted in Vajrayana traditions.
- Renewed global interest in Tibetan Buddhism, especially under the leadership of the 14th Dalai Lama.
- Archaeological and textual research on ancient monasteries like Vikramashila and Nalanda, which were key centers of Vajrayana studies.
- Inclusion in cultural and tourism promotion efforts under India's Buddhist Circuit development initiatives

Historical Background

• Origins:

Tantric Buddhism emerged in India around the 6th-7th century CE, particularly in the regions of Bihar, Bengal, and Odisha.

• Geographical Spread:

The tradition spread to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Mongolia, where it developed distinct forms and practices.

• Relation with Mahayana Buddhism:

Tantric Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism, emphasizing the attainment of enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Key Features of Tantric Buddhism

1. Use of Mantras, Mudras, Mandalas, and Visualization Techniques:

Tantric Buddhism involves the use of various techniques, such as mantras, mudras, mandalas, and visualization, to attain enlightenment.

2. Role of Gurus (Lamas) and Initiation Rites:

The tradition emphasizes the importance of gurus (lamas) and initiation rites in transmitting the teachings and practices.

3. Belief in Sudden Enlightenment:

Tantric Buddhism emphasizes the possibility of sudden enlightenment through intense practices.

3. Concept of Deity Yoga:

The tradition involves the practice of deity yoga, where practitioners visualize themselves as deities embodying enlightened qualities.

Important Texts and Figures

• Texts:

The Guhyasamāja Tantra, Hevajra Tantra, and Kalachakra Tantra are some of the key texts of Tantric Buddhism.

• Scholars and Practitioners:

Indian scholars and practitioners, such as Padmasambhava and Atisha, played a significant role in developing and transmitting the tradition. Tibetan figures, such as Tsongkhapa and Milarepa, also made significant contributions.

Cultural and Artistic Contributions

1. Influence on Buddhist Iconography:

Tantric Buddhism has had a significant influence on Buddhist iconography, particularly in the depiction of multi-headed and multi-armed deities.

2. Development of Tibetan Thangka Paintings:

The tradition has also contributed to the development of Tibetan thangka paintings, mandalas, and ritual art.

3. Contribution to Temple Architecture:

Tantric Buddhism has influenced the development of temple architecture, particularly in the construction of monasteries and temples in India and the Himalayan region.

Contemporary Relevance

1. Resurgence in Academic Interest:

There has been a resurgence of interest in Tantric Buddhism in academic circles, particularly in the study of its history, philosophy, and practices.

2. Influence in Modern Mindfulness and Meditation Practices:

Tantric Buddhism has also influenced modern mindfulness and meditation practices, particularly in the West.

3. Concerns over Cultural Appropriation:

However, there are concerns over cultural appropriation and commercialization of Tantric Buddhist practices and symbols.



Challenges and Debates

1. Interpretation and Preservation of Esoteric Practices: There are challenges in interpreting and preserving the esoteric practices of Tantric Buddhism, particularly in the context of modernization and globalization.

2. Tensions between Orthodox Buddhism and Tantric Traditions: There are also tensions between orthodox Buddhism and Tantric traditions, particularly in the interpretation of Buddhist teachings and practices.

3. Manuscript Preservation: The preservation of Tantric Buddhist manuscripts, particularly in India, is also a significant challenge.

Link with UPSC Syllabus

1.GS Paper I (Art and Culture): Tantric Buddhism is relevant to the study of art and culture, particularly in the context of Buddhist iconography, thangka paintings, and temple architecture.

2.GS Paper II (Cultural Diplomacy): The tradition is also relevant to the study of cultural diplomacy, particularly in the context of India-Tibet-Nepal relations.

3.GS Paper IV (Ethics): Tantric Buddhism is also relevant to the study of ethics, particularly in the context of philosophical underpinnings of Tantric concepts, such as unity, transcendence, and control of desires.

4.Essay: The tradition is also relevant to the essay topic, "The relevance of spiritual traditions in modern life."

Conclusion

In conclusion, Tantric Buddhism is a unique spiritual tradition that has played a significant role in shaping Indian and Himalayan cultural identity. Its emphasis on esoteric rituals, mantras, and meditation practices has contributed to its distinct character and practices. The tradition continues to be relevant in modern times, particularly in the context of academic interest, mindfulness and meditation practices, and cultural diplomacy.

Focus of the month

LANGUAGE POLICY OPERATION BRAHMA

Introduction

India is a multilingual nation with 22 official languages and hundreds of dialects. Digital communication, government services, and education have traditionally favored English or Hindi, leaving a vast linguistic population digitally excluded. To address this, the Indian government launched Bhashini, a flagship initiative under the National Language Translation Mission (NLTm).

At the core of Bhashini is a vision of "Ek Bharat, Bhasha Anek"—to empower every Indian with access to digital content in their native language. One of the driving engines behind this is a set of advanced language policy operations codenamed Brahma, referring to the generative and transformative aspect of linguistic AI frameworks in India.

Here are three major operations under this initiative:

1. Data Creation and Curation Operation

Overview

The foundation of any language AI model is data—parallel corpora, speech datasets, translation pairs, and annotated texts. The Brahma framework begins with Operation Dhvani, a massive crowdsourced and institutional effort to collect high-quality linguistic datasets across Indian languages.

Goals

- Build datasets for low-resource Indian languages.
- Ensure representation from dialects, regional variants, and tribal languages.
- Develop multimodal corpora (text, speech, and visual).

Activities

- Crowdsourcing platforms like Anuvaad and Bhasha Daan were launched, allowing citizens to donate voice data and translated text.
- Collaborations with universities and linguists to collect structured datasets from literature, textbooks, and historical archives.
- Use of AI tools to clean, align, and annotate the data. This includes tagging parts of speech, named entities, and syntactic trees.

Challenges

- Many Indian languages lack digitized resources.
- Dialects vary drastically even within a language (e.g., Bhojpuri vs. Maithili).
- Legal and ethical concerns regarding data ownership and privacy.

Impact

This operation has created the largest multilingual dataset repository in India, powering translation engines, ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition), and TTS (Text-to-Speech) systems. These are freely available on the Bhashini AI marketplace for startups and developers.

2. Multilingual AI Model Training Operation

Overview

Once data is available, the next step is training robust language models. Under the Brahma initiative, this is called Operation Jnana, which focuses on developing scalable and inclusive AI models for Indian languages.

Goals

- Build AI models that can understand, translate, and generate content in multiple Indian languages.
- Create unified multilingual models similar to Google's mT5 or Meta's NLLB, but optimized for Indian linguistic complexity.
- Ensure inclusivity and fairness in AI models.

Activities

1. Transfer Learning: Large models like IndicBERT, MuRIL, and INMT were pre-trained on multilingual data and fine-tuned for translation and question-answering tasks.
2. Zero-shot and Few-shot Learning: To empower extremely low-resource languages (e.g., Bodo or Santhali), models were trained to transfer knowledge from high-resource languages like Hindi or Tamil.
3. Speech Models: Using Whisper and wav2vec frameworks, multilingual ASR models were trained to recognize spoken inputs across accents and noise conditions.
4. Model Compression: To ensure models can run on low-end devices, distillation techniques were applied to reduce model size without losing performance.

Challenges

- Balancing linguistic diversity without bias—Hindi-heavy corpora tend to dominate.
- Lack of GPU infrastructure in Indian public institutions slowed early progress.
- Ensuring inclusivity—many tribal languages still lack representation.

Impact

Operation Jnana enabled the creation of AI tools for translation, voice assistants, search engines, and educational apps that can work in native Indian languages. These tools are being adopted in sectors like agriculture (Krishi GPT), education, and governance.

Integration into Public Services Operation

Overview

The third pillar of Brahma is Operation Vaani, which focuses on integrating these language technologies into **government platforms**, citizen services, and rural outreach.

Goals

- Make public services accessible in native languages.
- Integrate real-time translation and speech tools into key portals.
- Drive adoption in rural, semi-urban, and non-English speaking populations.



Activities

- Integration of real-time translation APIs into DigiLocker, UMANG app, CoWIN portal, and eCourts.
- Deployment of voice-based grievance redressal systems using Indian languages in local dialects.
- Empowering Panchayati Raj and rural health workers with AI-powered chatbots and helplines.
- Training frontline staff to use multilingual tech tools in education and healthcare.

Challenges

- Infrastructure gaps in rural areas (internet, devices).
- Training and change management among local officials.
- Ensuring accurate translation of technical and legal terminology.

Impact

- Millions of Indians now access government services in their preferred language. For instance:
 - Farmers can get Kisan Call Center updates in Assamese or Marathi.
 - School children in Odisha can interact with textbook content using Odia voicebots.
 - Public health information is available in tribal languages like Gondi and Kui.

Conclusion

The Brahma initiative under Bhashini represents a strategic, multi-pronged language policy that touches data, models, and applications. By democratizing access to language technology, it's not just a digital inclusion program—it's a linguistic revolution. The operations of Dhvani, Jnana, and Vaani are creating an India wherein language is no longer a barrier to opportunity.

This language policy model could become a blueprint for other multilingual nations grappling with similar digital divides. The journey of Brahma is far from over, but it has firmly laid the foundation for a truly Multilingual Digital India.

Focus of the month

JUDICIARY'S IN HOUSE INQUIRY AGAINST JUDGE

Judiciary's In-House Inquiry Against a Judge: An Overview

In a democratic framework governed by the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary is a cornerstone. However, this independence is coupled with a responsibility to uphold integrity, impartiality, and ethical standards. When a judge is suspected of misconduct or deviation from established judicial norms, mechanisms are required to ensure accountability without compromising judicial autonomy. One such mechanism is the In-House inquiry procedure within the judiciary, especially prevalent in countries like India, where a structured framework exists for addressing complaints against judges of higher courts.

What is an In-House Inquiry?

An in-house inquiry is an internal mechanism employed by the judiciary to examine allegations of misconduct against a judge. It is a preliminary, non-statutory process aimed at maintaining judicial discipline. This process operates without recourse to the executive or legislature, reflecting the judiciary's self-regulatory nature. This procedure is typically invoked in cases involving judges of the High Courts or the Supreme Court, where direct removal or suspension by the executive is not constitutionally allowed following an impeachment process.

Historical Background

The concept of an in-house mechanism was institutionalized after concerns about judicial accountability surfaced in the 1990s. A prominent case that pushed for reform was that of Justice V. Ramaswami, a judge of the Supreme Court, against whom serious charges were made. The failure to impeach him despite proven misconduct exposed the need for a quicker and internal disciplinary system that didn't depend solely on parliamentary proceedings. In 1997, the Full Court of the Supreme Court adopted a procedure to handle complaints against judges. This was termed the 'In-House Procedure', and it remains the guiding framework for such internal investigations.

Legal and Constitutional Context

The Constitution of India provides that a judge of the Supreme Court or High Court can only be removed by impeachment under Article 124(4) and Article 217, through a motion passed by both Houses of Parliament. However, this process is politically charged, time-consuming, and rare. As a result, the judiciary adopted its own method of handling complaints in the form of in-house proceedings. Although not codified by law, the in-house procedure was recognized by the Supreme Court in the case of Indira Jaising v. Supreme Court of India (2003), where the Court upheld its validity.

How the In-House Inquiry Works

1. Receiving the Complaint

The process begins when a written complaint is received against a judge. This complaint can be filed by any individual, including lawyers, litigants, or even other judges.

2. Preliminary Scrutiny

The Chief Justice of India (CJI) or the Chief Justice of a High Court examines whether the complaint is frivolous or has prima facie merit. If deemed frivolous, it is dismissed at this stage.

3. Constitution of a Committee

If the complaint is serious, a committee is formed. In case of a Supreme Court judge, the committee is headed by a senior Supreme Court judge and includes other judges. For a High Court judge, the committee usually includes two Chief Justices of other High Courts.

4. Conduct of Inquiry

The committee examines documents, statements, and may seek written responses from the judge in question. No formal trial or cross-examination is conducted as in criminal proceedings. The process is confidential, ensuring protection of judicial independence and reputation until guilt is established.

5. Report Submission

The committee submits its findings to the Chief Justice. The report may recommend:

- Dismissal of the complaint
- Advising the judge to resign
- Advising the judge to take voluntary retirement
- Further action such as initiating impeachment proceedings if misconduct is proven

6. Post-Inquiry Actions

If the misconduct is serious, the report may be forwarded to the President of India, prompting initiation of removal proceedings under Article 124(4). However, judges cannot be removed or penalized by the committee itself.

Limitations of the In-House Inquiry

Despite its intent, the in-house inquiry process faces several limitations:

- **Lack of Transparency:** The proceedings are confidential, and even the outcomes are not always made public, leading to accusations of opacity.
- **No Penal Authority:** The committee cannot impose penalties, making it seem ineffective in serious cases unless impeachment is pursued.
- **Dependence on Voluntary Action:** Recommendations to resign or retire are not binding, leaving room for non-compliance by the judge concerned.
- **No Statutory Backing:** As a non-statutory procedure, it relies entirely on internal discipline rather than legal enforcement.



Notable Cases Involving In-House Inquiry

1. Justice Soumitra Sen (2011)

Justice Sen of the Calcutta High Court was found guilty of misappropriation of funds. An in-house inquiry indicted him, leading to the first-ever impeachment motion passed in the Rajya Sabha. However, he resigned before the Lok Sabha vote.

2. Justice P.D. Dinakaran (2011)

Facing allegations of land-grab and corruption, an in-house panel found material against him. He resigned before the impeachment could be completed.

3. Justice S. N. Shukla (2021)

The Allahabad High Court judge was found guilty by an in-house panel in 2018. Despite this, the judge continued to remain in office until retirement in 2021, highlighting enforcement issues.

Need for Reform

The need for a strong, transparent, and enforceable judicial accountability framework has been reiterated often. The Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (2010) was proposed to institutionalize the complaint mechanism, but it lapsed. Advocates for reform emphasize:

- Codifying the in-house procedure
- Establishing an independent oversight body
- Ensuring public accountability without undermining judicial independence

Comparative Perspective

Other democracies like the United States and United Kingdom have structured judicial conduct commissions that operate with a greater degree of transparency and legal backing. For example:

- In the UK, the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) handles complaints and can recommend actions.
- In the US, the judicial Councils Reform and Judicial Conduct and Disability Act governs the discipline of federal judges.

India's system, by contrast, relies more heavily on internal discretion rather than external accountability.

Conclusion

The in-house inquiry mechanism is a necessary tool to uphold judicial integrity without infringing on the judiciary's independence. However, its non-binding nature, confidentiality, and lack of statutory support make it inadequate in ensuring public confidence in some cases. To strengthen this framework, India must move toward legal codification, transparency, and independent oversight while maintaining the sanctity of judicial office.

Judges wield immense power and influence, and their actions must be above reproach. The in-house inquiry system must evolve to reflect both judicial dignity and public accountability in a modern democracy.

Focus of the month

THE BODO PEACE ACCORDS: A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW

Background: Who are the Bodos?

The Bodos are an ethnic and linguistic group in Assam, primarily inhabiting the northwestern part of the state. For decades, they demanded autonomy, cultural recognition, and development in the face of perceived neglect and identity threats. Their demand evolved from autonomy within Assam to a separate state called Bodoland.

First Bodo Accord – 1993

Signed between: Government of India, Government of Assam, and the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU).

Key Outcome: Creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC).

Objective: To provide limited autonomy to Bodos within Assam.

Issues:

- BAC had no constitutional protection.
- Non-Bodo groups in the region opposed it.
- Many Bodo groups felt it didn't go far enough.

Second Bodo Accord – 2003

Signed between: Government of India, Government of Assam, and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT).

Key Outcome: Formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

BTC governed areas: The Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD)—Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri, and Chirang.

Features:

- Greater autonomy and legislative powers.
- 40-member council (30 elected, 10 nominated).
- BLT leaders laid down arms and joined mainstream politics.

Limitations:

- Continued demand for full statehood.
- Tensions with non-Bodo communities in BTAD.

Third Bodo Accord – 2020

Signed between: Government of India, Government of Assam, all four factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), and leaders of ABSU and BTC.

Key Outcomes:

- Renaming of BTAD to Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).
- Greater autonomy and more legislative, administrative and financial powers.
- Inclusion of more Bodo-populated villages in the BTR.
- Creation of a Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council for Bodos living outside BTR.
- Development packages worth Rs. 1,500 crore over 3 years.
- Disbandment and rehabilitation of armed cadres (NDFB factions).

Significance:

- Claimed to be a "final and comprehensive solution" to the Bodo issue.
- Inclusive approach by involving all major Bodo factions.
- Emphasis on development, peace, and coexistence.



Impact and Analysis

Positives:

- Significant reduction in insurgency and violence in the region.
- Mainstreaming of former militants.
- Boost to local governance and infrastructure development.

Challenges:

- Ethnic tensions between Bodos and non-Bodos (especially Adivasis, Koch-Rajbongshis, Muslims).
- Implementation gaps in promises made (land rights, political representation).
- Demands from other groups in Assam for similar autonomous arrangements.

Conclusion

The Bodo Peace Accords reflect India's complex approach to ethnic identity, Federalism and conflict resolution. While the 2020 accord marks a hopeful chapter, its success depends on inclusive governance, peaceful coexistence and faithful implementation.

Focus of the month

WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (WSDS) 2025 – A PRAGMATIC OVERVIEW

Introduction

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025, hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), was held in New Delhi from March 5 to 7, 2025. As India's premier annual climate event, this year's summit revolved around the theme: "Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions." Bringing together global leaders, policymakers, corporate heads, researchers, and civil society, WSDS 2025 served as a critical platform to discuss solutions to the escalating climate crisis and to strengthen multilateral climate cooperation ahead of COP30.

Background and Context

The WSDS was launched in 2001 and has since evolved into a leading forum on sustainable development in the Global South. The 2025 edition came at a crucial moment—amidst mounting global climate stress, extreme weather events, and growing disparity in climate finance allocation. For India, which has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, the summit provided a timely opportunity to solidify its international position and highlight its developmental needs while aligning with global climate goals.

Objectives and Outcomes of WSDS 2025

The primary objectives of WSDS 2025 included:

- Promoting meaningful partnerships across governments, private sectors, and communities.
- Driving innovation and investment in green infrastructure and sustainable transport.
- Shaping dialogue around climate financing, just transition, and resilience building

Key outcomes of the summit included:

- The launch of sector-specific policy tracks, including on critical minerals, cement decarbonization, and low-emission transport.
- Strengthened commitment towards context-specific carbon finance standards.
- Reinforcement of India's leadership in climate diplomacy by advocating equity-based climate actions and voicing concerns of developing nations.

Key Issues Addressed: Ethics, Responsibility, and Governance

WSDS 2025 tackled some of the most urgent ethical and governance-related climate questions:

- The need for a just transition that protects vulnerable communities during economic and environmental shifts.
- Corporate responsibility in high-emission sectors and the importance of transparency in sustainability reporting.
- Governance mechanisms to build resilient infrastructure, promote data equity, and develop trust-based finance models for emerging economies.

Panels also deliberated on the ethics of carbon trading, balancing national sovereignty with global accountability, and ensuring that sustainability solutions are inclusive and equitable.

Global Cooperation and International Frameworks

The summit witnessed participation from over 70 countries, as well as representatives from UNEP, GIZ, UNDP, and regional climate coalitions. Global discussions emphasized:

- Strengthening multilateral climate frameworks and support for the Global Stocktake process.
- Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation to facilitate technological and knowledge transfers.
- Bridging the gap between global climate ambitions and local execution through better-aligned financing models and international governance reforms.

India's call for climate justice and differentiated responsibilities received strong support from developing nations, underscoring the need for a balanced global framework.

Implications for India: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities:

A chance for India to lead in climate innovation—especially in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green manufacturing. Strengthening India's global profile as a climate negotiator for the Global South and advancing its ambitions under the Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE) movement.



Challenges:

- Scaling up climate finance mechanisms at both national and subnational levels.
- Ensuring inclusive implementation that does not disproportionately impact informal labor and agrarian economies.
- Integrating summit-level outcomes into state-specific development policies and achieving policy coherence across ministries.

Conclusion

WSDS 2025 proved to be more than a dialogue platform—it initiated tangible action points for nations to collaborate, fund, and innovate sustainably. For India, it reaffirmed the commitment to a development model that is climate-smart, inclusive, and globally responsible. However, the translation of ideas into actions, especially at the grassroots level, will determine the true impact of the summit.

Way Ahead

Moving forward, the following steps are crucial:

- **Localization of Action Plans:** National and state governments must align WSDS policy takeaways with regional development needs through capacity building and integrated climate governance.
- **Monitoring & Accountability:** Create real-time monitoring frameworks to assess the progress of climate initiatives, supported by community feedback mechanisms.
- **Financing Innovation:** India must lead the way in developing hybrid climate finance models—combining public funds, private investments, and international grants for low-carbon projects.
- **Strengthening Climate Literacy:** Embed sustainability into education and vocational training to build a climate-conscious workforce and increase public engagement.
- **Inclusive Partnerships:** Ensure that partnerships are not limited to global actors but also include local communities, start-ups, and grassroots innovators to ensure holistic development.

With the momentum from WSDS 2025, India is in a strong position to influence the climate agenda regionally and globally. The focus now must shift to implementation, impact, and inclusivity in every climate-related decision ahead.

Focus of the month

INDIA-NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE COOPERATION PACT: A STRATEGIC MILESTONE

Introduction

India and New Zealand took a historic step forward in 2024 by signing a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to institutionalize and enhance bilateral defence cooperation. This agreement comes at a time of growing geopolitical complexity in the Indo-Pacific region, where both nations recognize the importance of working together to ensure peace, stability, and security. The pact aims to promote closer military ties, improve interoperability between the armed forces, and foster mutual understanding through various forms of collaboration. It represents a significant shift in New Zealand's strategic outreach and aligns with India's broader vision for regional cooperation.

Key Provisions of the Defence Cooperation Pact

The India-New Zealand defence MoU includes several provisions aimed at enhancing mutual military capabilities and cooperation.

- **Joint Training and Exercises:** Regular combined military training and field exercises to enhance interoperability.
- **Maritime Security Cooperation:** Joint efforts to ensure freedom of navigation, secure maritime trade routes, and coordinate responses to maritime threats.
- **Intelligence Sharing:** Strengthening mechanisms for intelligence exchange, especially in areas like cyber security and maritime domain awareness.
- **Capacity Building and Technology Transfer:** Support for defence capacity building, technical collaboration, and possible joint research and development projects.
- **High-Level Exchanges and Dialogue:** Institutionalized strategic and military-level dialogues, reciprocal visits of defence personnel, and naval ship exchanges.

Strategic Relevance in the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly viewed as the new geopolitical and geostrategic theatre of the 21st century. With rising concerns over China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, militarization of artificial islands, and increasing cyber and hybrid threats, regional and global powers are reinforcing strategic alliances.

India, under its "Act East Policy" and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), is seeking to build resilient and inclusive regional partnerships. The inclusion of New Zealand into India's defence cooperation network not only strengthens India's Indo-Pacific strategy but also allows New Zealand to play a more proactive role in maintaining regional balance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the signing of the MoU, reiterated India's stance: "We believe in development, not expansionism." His counterpart, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, echoed the sentiment by emphasizing the importance of a "free and open Indo-Pacific" and acknowledged the "challenging strategic outlook."

Challenges in Implementation Despite the optimism, there are several challenges that could affect the implementation of the defence MoU:

- **Geographical Distance:** Physical separation between India and New Zealand poses logistical constraints to regular joint training and defence exchanges.
- **Defence Doctrine Alignment:** While India emphasizes strategic autonomy, New Zealand is largely aligned with Western defence standards, requiring alignment of doctrines and operational methods.
- **Resource Allocation:** Both countries will need to allocate dedicated budgetary and personnel resources to ensure consistent collaboration.
- **Public Perception and Political Will:** Sustaining defence cooperation will depend on long-term political commitment and public support in both countries.

Comparative and International Context

India has expanded its defence cooperation network across the Indo-Pacific and beyond, signing key defence agreements with countries like Australia, the United States, France, Japan, and Vietnam. These agreements often include logistics exchange, intelligence sharing, and joint production. New Zealand, on the other hand, has traditionally focused on peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance roles. This defence pact with India represents a shift towards more active strategic participation. In comparison, the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership includes deeper maritime cooperation and defence logistics support. Similarly, India's agreement with Japan includes annual joint naval exercises and technology transfers. The India-New Zealand MoU may not be as extensive initially, but it provides a strong foundation to build upon.

Future Prospects and Opportunities The MoU opens the door for a range of future initiatives:

Tri-lateral and Multilateral Frameworks:

Inclusion of New Zealand in India-led multilateral defence initiatives, such as MILAN naval exercises and the IPOI working groups.

Cyber and Space Cooperation:

Joint programs on cyber defence, satellite monitoring, and space situational awareness.

Defence Education and Training:

Exchange programs between military academies, officer-level training, and language/cultural integration modules. Additionally, New Zealand's decision to join the IPOI aligns it with India's maritime vision and can catalyze further cooperation in areas like disaster relief, blue economy, and marine biodiversity.



Conclusion

The signing of the India-New Zealand Defence Cooperation Pact in 2024 is a historic and strategic milestone that enhances bilateral relations and contributes to broader Indo-Pacific security. It is a reflection of shared democratic values, commitment to a rules-based order, and a mutual desire to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in a rapidly evolving global landscape. While challenges remain in implementation, the MoU is a significant first step in building a comprehensive and sustainable defence partnership. By fostering trust, institutionalizing dialogue, and embracing multilateral collaboration, India and New Zealand are poised to become strong security partners in the Indo-Pacific century.

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- Press releases from Indian and New Zealand defence ministries

Focus of the month

RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

Introduction

The concept of development has transcended economic boundaries to embrace a human-centric approach in the modern age. In this context, the 'Right to Development' (RTD) is considered a vital human right, encompassing the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres. Recognizing this right as a fundamental right implies granting it enforceability and constitutional status, enabling individuals to claim development as a legal entitlement.

The evolution of human rights from civil and political to economic, social, and cultural has brought development to the forefront. With the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986, the global community acknowledged the interdependence of all rights and emphasized that the human person is the central subject of development.

Concept and Evolution of the Right to Development

The Right to Development (RTD) is an inalienable human right enabling individuals and peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development.

This right emphasizes:

- People-Centered Development
- Equity and Justice
- Participation
- Sustainability

Historical Evolution with Full Forms

- UDHR (1948): Universal Declaration of Human Rights – recognized rights to education, work, and living standards.
- ICESCR (1966)*: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – committed states to realize economic and social rights.
- ACHPR (1981): African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights – explicitly included the Right to Development.
- UNDRD (1986): United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development – adopted by UNGA to consolidate RTD as a global norm.

Global Legal Framework and Debates

While universally recognized, the Right to Development remains largely non-binding and declaratory. Despite its inclusion in multiple international charters and conferences, it faces obstacles:

- North-South Divide: Developing countries demand international cooperation; developed nations focus on internal human rights.
- Implementation Challenges: Lack of accountability mechanisms and financial support hampers realization.
- No Binding Treaty: RTD remains a declaration without a convention to enforce it.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda integrate aspects of RTD such as poverty alleviation, education, health, and equality.

Indian Constitutional and Legal Perspective

India does not explicitly mention the Right to Development in its Constitution. However, it has been implicitly recognized through a combination of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs):

A. Fundamental Rights:

- Article 21: Right to life and personal liberty includes right to livelihood, shelter, health, and education.
- Article 14: Right to equality ensures equal access to development benefits.
- Article 19: Freedom of speech, movement, and association helps in development participation.

B. Directive Principles (Part IV):

- Article 38: State to secure a social order promoting justice.
- Article 39: Provides for equal pay, health, and welfare.
- Articles 41 & 46: Focus on right to work, education, and economic interests of weaker sections.

C. Judicial Expansion:

- Olga Tellis v. BMC – Right to livelihood.
- Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh – Right to education under Article 21.
- Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India – Right against bonded labour.
- Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh – Development rights of tribal people.

Policy Initiatives Reflecting RTD:

- MNREGA
- Right to Education Act (2009)
- National Health Mission
- Digital India, Skill India

Arguments for Recognizing RTD as a Fundamental Right

1. **Justiciability:** If RTD is made a fundamental right, individuals can approach courts for violation, making development legally enforceable.
2. **Equity:** Promotes fair and inclusive access to resources and opportunities, especially for marginalized communities.
3. **Human Dignity:** Development ensures fulfillment of basic needs like health, education, and housing which are essential to human dignity.
4. **International Alignment:** Aligns India's legal framework with international human rights commitments like the UN Declaration and SDGs.
5. **Democratic Participation:** Empowers people to actively participate in shaping development policies, strengthening democratic governance.

Challenges and Limitations

1. **Lack of Constitutional Recognition:** The absence of an explicit RTD in the Constitution limits enforceability.
2. **Policy vs. Right:** Development programs are treated as welfare schemes, not rights, limiting public accountability.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Financial and administrative limitations hinder the ability to guarantee development outcomes.
4. **Implementation Deficits:** Issues such as corruption, poor monitoring, and inefficient bureaucracy undermine effectiveness.
5. **Urban-Rural and Gender Gaps:** Uneven distribution of development leads to persistent disparities across regions and genders.

The right to Development

Every child has the right to development that lets the child explore her/his full potential. Unfavourable living conditions of underprivileged children prevents them from growing in a free and uninhibited way.



Comparative and International Examples

South Africa: The Constitution includes rights to housing, healthcare, food, and social security. Courts have upheld these socio-economic rights.

Bangladesh: Judiciary has interpreted the right to life under Article 32 of its Constitution to include healthcare, shelter, and food.

Latin America: Countries like Colombia and Brazil allow courts to enforce socio-economic rights, enabling citizens to demand state accountability in development-related matters.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The Right to Development is a composite, inclusive, and dynamic right. While India has taken significant steps through judicial activism and policy measures, the absence of explicit constitutional recognition limits its enforceability.

To strengthen RTD as a fundamental right:

- A constitutional amendment may be considered.
- Better implementation mechanisms and resource allocation are necessary.
- Ensuring transparency, decentralization, and participatory governance will empower citizens.

References

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EDITORIAL SECTION



Judicial Delays in India

General Studies-2; Topic: Governance, Constitution, Polity, and Social Justice.

Introduction:

- President Droupadi Murmu has drawn attention to a persistent issue within India's judiciary — the frequent granting of adjournments, which contributes significantly to case pendency. This delay undermines judicial efficiency and public confidence in the legal system.

Background

- Judicial Framework:** India's justice system is based on the Code of Civil Procedure and Criminal Procedure Code, with constitutional and appellate jurisdictions vested in the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- Tribunals:** Introduced in 1976 to handle specific legal matters, but haven't significantly reduced pendency.

Key Causes of Delay

- Low Judge-to-Population Ratio:** India has 21 judges per million people, far below the Law Commission's recommended 50.
- Vacancies:** About 30% of High Court positions remain vacant (as of late 2024).
- Unassessed Legislation:** New laws are passed without evaluating their judicial burden.
- Overburdened Judiciary:** Judges handle administrative tasks alongside cases, leading to fatigue and errors.
- Witness Delays:** Non-appearance or late appearance of witnesses prolongs trials.

Current Judicial Landscape

- High Courts:** Functioning with 770 judges out of a sanctioned strength of 1,114, with case resolution taking 6–7 years on average.
- Supreme Court:** Operates near full strength but is weighed down by a wide appellate and writ jurisdiction.

Broader Impacts

- Eroding Public Trust:** Delay in justice delivery leads to loss of faith in institutions.
- Access to Justice:** Marginalized communities suffer the most.
- Economic Implications:** Delays hinder business confidence and contract enforcement.

Government Initiatives

- National Judicial Infrastructure Plan (NJIP):** Aims to upgrade court facilities.
- E-Courts Project:** Supports digitization and virtual hearings, with scope for expansion.
- Tribunal System:** Set up to share judicial burden, but effectiveness has been mixed.

Persistent Challenges

- Unfilled Vacancies:** Delay in judicial appointments keeps backlog high.
- Lack of Judicial Impact Assessment:** Laws are enacted without understanding how they strain the judiciary.
- Cultural Hesitancy:** Parties prefer court litigation over Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- Poor Infrastructure:** Many courts lack the technological tools for efficient functioning.
- Judges' Overload:** Leads to slower verdicts and more appeals.
- Tribunal Abolition (2021):** Some tribunals were shut down, adding pressure on the High Courts.

Global Best Practices

- United States:** Promotes ADR to settle disputes outside courts.
- United Kingdom:** Emphasizes pre-trial protocols and case management.
- Singapore:** Uses court tech to expedite hearings and reduce delays.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Judicial Cadre**
 - Raise the judge-to-population ratio to global benchmarks.
 - Start judicial appointment processes early to prevent gaps.
- Institutionalize Judicial Impact Assessments**
 - Follow Justice M. Jagannadha Rao Committee recommendations.
 - All new laws should include estimates of additional caseloads and resource needs.
- Promote ADR Mechanisms**
 - Encourage mediation, arbitration, and conciliation.
 - Build public trust and awareness in non-litigious solutions.
- Upgrade Court Infrastructure**
 - Expand e-filing, video conferencing, and case management systems.
 - Deploy technology to handle administrative functions.
- Curb Adjournment Culture**
 - Impose stricter limits on adjournments.
 - Monitor their use through a regulatory oversight framework.

Conclusion

- To resolve judicial delays and reduce pendency, India needs a comprehensive reform package focusing on judicial appointments, infrastructure development, legislative planning, and cultural change.
- Promoting ADR and leveraging technology can transform the judicial landscape, making justice more efficient, inclusive, and trustworthy.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



The Immigration and Foreigners Bill

General Studies-2; Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Introduction:

- The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha, seeks to modernise, consolidate, and replace the colonial-era laws regulating the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners in India.
- However, the bill has attracted both support and criticism for its stringent provisions and wide executive powers.

Legislative Background and Objective

- The bill aims to replace four existing laws, some of which date back to the pre-independence era, including:
 - The Foreigners Act, 1946
 - The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
 - The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
 - The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000
- The primary objective is to:
 - Streamline immigration services related to foreigners' entry, stay, registration, and departure.
 - Enhance national security and curb illegal immigration through updated legal mechanisms.

Contextualising the Bill Globally

- The bill aligns with a global trend of tightening immigration controls, primarily in response to:
 - Rising illegal migration
 - Geopolitical tensions
 - Security threats and economic considerations
- However, many countries today also show growing resistance to even legal migration, which is often influenced by political narratives and socio-cultural anxieties.

Key Provisions of the Bill

- Denial of Entry or Stay: Any foreigner posing a threat to India's national security, sovereignty, or integrity can be barred from entering or staying in the country.
- No Warrant Required for Arrest:
 - Authorities can arrest without a warrant any person suspected of entering India without valid documents.
 - Arrest can be made even on "reasonable suspicion", raising concerns of subjectivity.
- Reporting Obligations on Institutions:
 - Educational and medical institutions are required to report the presence of foreigners to registration authorities.
- Association Clause:
 - Foreigners are barred from associating with "persons of a specified description", a vague term open to broad interpretation.
- Lack of Appellate Mechanism:
 - The bill does not provide an appeal route against executive decisions, leaving room for unchecked bureaucratic power.

Constitutional and Human Rights Concerns

- While the Constitution does not grant foreigners unrestricted rights, it does ensure protection under Article 21 (Right to Life and Liberty).

Critics argue the bill:

- Violates fundamental rights by enabling arrest and deportation without due process.
- Could be used to target political dissidents, journalists, and activists under the pretext of national security.
- Lacks judicial oversight and transparency, increasing the risk of misuse.

Concerns Raised by the Opposition and Civil Society

- Overreach of Executive Power:
 - Unfettered discretion is given to authorities to determine who poses a "threat" without clear guidelines.
- Political Misuse:
 - Potential to deny entry to critics of the government or prevent them from meeting individuals or groups deemed undesirable.
- Impact on India's Global Image:
 - The law could be seen as restrictive and authoritarian, damaging India's reputation as a democratic, open society.

Need for Checks and Balances

- While national security must be safeguarded, the principle of proportionality must guide any restrictions on personal liberty.
- Suggestions include:
 - Establishing an independent appellate body to hear appeals against detention or deportation.
 - Judicial review mechanisms to ensure accountability.
 - Clear definitions of terms like "reasonable suspicion" and "specified description" to prevent arbitrary interpretation.

Way Forward

- A balanced immigration law must:
 - Protect national interest and sovereignty.
 - Uphold constitutional values and basic human rights.
 - Facilitate legal migration and cultural exchange.
 - Ensure transparency, accountability, and due process in enforcement.
- The bill offers an opportunity to modernise immigration law, but must do so without undermining democratic values or enabling politically motivated enforcement.

Conclusion

- The Immigration and Foreigners Bill is a significant and necessary step in updating India's immigration framework. However, the provisions must be carefully evaluated and possibly amended to ensure that national security objectives are met without compromising fundamental rights or opening doors to misuse.
- A balanced approach—combining vigilance with constitutional safeguards—is essential to uphold India's image as a responsible and rights-respecting democracy.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Bridging the Gender Gap in the Judiciary

General Studies-1; Topic: Role of women and women's organization.

Introduction:

- The Indian judiciary has made strides in inclusivity at the entry level, but continues to struggle with gender parity in its higher echelons. While the number of women judges at the district level has seen noticeable improvement, their presence in High Courts and the Supreme Court remains worryingly low.
- According to the Supreme Court's "State of the Judiciary" report (2023), women make up only 4% of High Court judges and just 9.3% of judges in the Supreme Court. Alarming, some states have either no women judges or just one in their High Courts, reflecting a serious imbalance.

Barriers in Legal Careers:

- Despite legal reforms and increasing female participation in legal education, women continue to face structural barriers within the profession. Only around 3% of advocates in India are women.
- There is minimal representation of women as senior advocates or in Bar Councils, which significantly reduces the pool of women eligible for elevation to higher judiciary roles.
- This narrowing of opportunity is often termed the "funnel effect", where the pipeline of women entering the legal profession narrows drastically before reaching senior roles.

Policy and Systemic Hurdles:

- **Entry-Level Obstacles:**
 - Judicial service rules in many states demand continuous legal practice as a qualification for entry-level judicial roles.
 - Women, who are more likely to take career breaks due to family responsibilities, are disadvantaged by these rigid requirements.
- **Retention Challenges:**
 - Policies such as mandatory transfers discourage women from continuing in judicial services, especially if they lack family or institutional support.
 - The absence of flexible work arrangements or support systems forces many to opt out prematurely.
- **Infrastructural Deficiencies:**
 - Numerous district courts lack basic facilities like dedicated washrooms for women judges and lawyers.
 - There is also a shortage of creches, nursing rooms, and safe spaces for mothers, further discouraging long-term engagement.
- **Cultural Pressures:**
 - In a society where women are expected to be primary caregivers, it becomes difficult to pursue demanding and inflexible careers like law.
 - The lack of institutional understanding of these dual roles perpetuates gender disparity.
- **Economic Disincentives:**
 - Women entering legal practice often start with lower incomes than their male counterparts.
 - The absence of maternity benefits, stipends, or financial support discourages many from establishing or sustaining a legal career.

The Public-Private Divide

- Political theorist Carole Pateman's public-private divide offers a lens to understand how women's caregiving roles (private sphere) are undervalued when they try to enter the public sphere, like law and judiciary.
- Without gender-sensitive institutional policies, women are forced to adapt to a system designed around male life trajectories, which excludes their experiences and needs.

Why Representation Matters:

- **Lack of Gendered Perspective in Judgments:** A male-dominated bench may lack a nuanced understanding in cases concerning domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, and family law.
- **Erosion of Public Trust:** A judiciary that doesn't reflect society's diversity risks being seen as elitist and disconnected. Increased representation improves credibility and legitimacy.
- **Role-Model Effect:** When women occupy visible leadership roles in the judiciary, it creates aspiration and confidence among young women to pursue similar careers, breaking societal barriers.

The "Female Gaze" in Judicial Design and Policy:

- A female-centric approach to legal and institutional policy-making recognizes that neutral policies often overlook gendered experiences. Implementing a "female gaze" involves identifying and correcting biases in recruitment, evaluation, infrastructure, and promotion.
- It seeks to accommodate women's distinct needs, rather than requiring them to adapt to a system not designed for them.

Global Practices India Can Learn From:

- **United Kingdom & Canada:**
 - Introduced gender quotas, flexible working hours, and gender-sensitization training for judges.
 - Maintained balanced representation on judicial selection panels.
- **Adoptable Measures for India:**
 - Mentorship programs for young women lawyers.
 - Gender-balanced committees in judiciary appointments and infrastructure planning.
 - Women's legal associations to amplify issues specific to women in law.

Way Forward:

- **Infrastructural Support:**
 - Involve women in judicial planning committees to ensure that courts are designed with gender-specific needs in mind.
 - Mandate facilities like crèches, nursing rooms, and secure restrooms in all court buildings.
- **Policy Overhaul:**
 - Allow career breaks for women without penalizing them in recruitment or promotion.
 - Make transfer and promotion policies more gender-sensitive.
- **Supportive Environment:**
 - Integrate gender sensitization in judicial training.
 - Offer financial aid or stipends to women from underprivileged backgrounds pursuing law.
- **Institutional Changes:**
 - Implement evaluation systems that recognize non-linear career trajectories often seen in women professionals.
 - Establish family-friendly judicial workspaces, enabling long-term career continuity.

Conclusion

- For India to truly uphold the values of justice and equality, the judiciary must become more inclusive and representative.
- Gender parity in the judiciary is not merely symbolic; it is essential for a fair, diverse, and empathetic legal system that resonates with and serves all sections of society equally.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



India's Harsh Summer

General Studies-1; Topic: Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

Introduction:

- India is set to experience one of the harshest summers in recent history, with temperatures expected to rise above normal and frequent heat waves threatening lives and livelihoods.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has already reported that February was the warmest since 1901, and the early onset of summer could result in an extended hot season.
- This has serious implications for multiple sectors, including public health, water security, power demand, agriculture, and the economy.

Rising Temperatures and Increased Heat Wave Events

- IMD's Forecast
 - The IMD has predicted that both minimum and maximum temperatures will remain above normal across most parts of India.
 - The early onset of summer may result in prolonged heat wave conditions.
 - Parts of North, Central, and South India are expected to face extreme heat.
 - Some regions, like Konkan and coastal Karnataka, have already experienced early heatwave conditions.
- What is a Heat Wave?
 - According to the IMD, a heat wave occurs when:
 - a. The maximum temperature reaches 40°C or more in plains and 37°C in coastal areas.
 - b. A temperature increase of 4.5°C to 6.4°C above normal is considered a moderate heat wave.
 - c. A severe heat wave occurs when the temperature exceeds 6.5°C above normal.
- Climate Change and Rising Temperatures
 - Climate change has worsened heat waves by increasing temperature extremes.
 - Global warming has led to longer summers and reduced rainfall in many regions.
 - Urban Heat Island Effect—where cities become significantly warmer than rural areas due to concrete structures and lack of greenery—exacerbates heat stress.

Impact of Extreme Summer on India

- Public Health Risks
 - Heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heatstroke, will rise.
 - Vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, outdoor workers, and people with pre-existing conditions, will be at greater risk.
 - Dehydration and electrolyte imbalances may lead to kidney issues, heart problems, and respiratory distress.
 - High temperatures increase hospitalizations and mortality rates.
- Water Scarcity and Management Challenges
 - Groundwater depletion will intensify, especially in peninsular India, leading to acute water shortages.
 - Drought conditions may emerge in states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Gujarat.
 - Ineffective water management in cities could result in severe water supply disruptions.
- Power Demand and Energy Crisis
 - The demand for electricity is expected to peak at 270 MW, up from 250 MW last year.
 - Thermal power plants might struggle due to increased cooling needs and low water levels.
 - Frequent power cuts could affect industrial production, digital connectivity, and daily life.
- Agricultural and Economic Impact
 - High temperatures can damage crops, reducing wheat, paddy, and vegetable yields.
 - Farmers will need more irrigation, further stressing already depleting water reserves.
 - Livestock heat stress may lead to lower milk and meat production, impacting rural incomes.
 - Tourism, construction, and outdoor work productivity will decline.
- Increased Frequency of Extreme Weather Events
 - Erratic summer showers could result in floods in some areas and extreme dryness in others.
 - The unpredictability of weather patterns is making disaster preparedness more challenging.

Government Measures and Preparedness

- Heat Wave Action Plans
 - IMD issues heat wave alerts through its early warning system.
 - State governments and urban local bodies must implement heat action plans in affected areas.
 - Health advisories should be issued, informing people to stay indoors, avoid direct sunlight, and stay hydrated.
- Strengthening Water Management
 - Governments must ensure water availability through rainwater harvesting and groundwater conservation.
 - Desalination plants and wastewater recycling should be promoted in water-scarce regions.
 - Irrigation efficiency programs like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) should be expanded.
- Managing Power Demand
 - Power plants should prepare for increased demand by ensuring fuel availability.
 - Energy efficiency programs should be encouraged to reduce excessive power consumption.
 - Renewable energy sources like solar power should be expanded to reduce dependency on coal.
- Health Infrastructure and Awareness Campaigns
 - Hospitals should be equipped to handle heat stroke patients with cooling centers and hydration points.
 - Public advisories must be broadcasted via TV, radio, and digital platforms to educate people about heat safety measures.
 - Workers, especially laborers, farmers, and outdoor personnel, should be given heat protection guidelines.

Long-Term Policy Recommendations

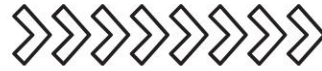
- Climate-Resilient Urban Planning
 - Encourage eco-friendly building designs with heat-resistant materials.
 - Promote cool roofs and reflective paints to reduce urban heating.
- Sustainable Water Management
 - Strict water conservation laws to prevent over-extraction of groundwater.
 - Promote micro-irrigation techniques like drip and sprinkler irrigation.
- Renewable Energy Transition
 - Strengthening solar, wind, and hydropower projects to reduce energy dependency.
 - Implementing demand-side energy management to prevent overloading of the power grid.

Conclusion

- India's upcoming summer poses a major challenge in terms of public health, water security, power demand, and agriculture. The IMD's early warnings must be taken seriously, and governments at all levels must act swiftly to ensure preparedness and mitigation.
- With scientific planning, community participation, and proactive governance, India can mitigate the risks and ensure the safety and well-being of its citizens during extreme summers.
- "Preparedness today will determine resilience tomorrow."

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Expanding the PM E-DRIVE Scheme for a Comprehensive EV Transition in India

General Studies-2; Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Introduction

- The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme is designed to accelerate India's transition to electric vehicles (EVs) across various transport sectors.
- It demonstrates India's commitment to reducing fossil fuel dependency and meeting climate action goals.
- However, the exclusion of private bus operators from the scheme raises concerns about achieving large-scale EV adoption.

Potential Impact of the PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- Environmental Benefits
 - The scheme aligns with India's Paris Agreement commitments by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Electrification of public transport helps curb urban air pollution, reducing health risks from fossil fuel emissions.
- Economic Growth and Employment
 - The EV transition boosts manufacturing, battery production, and charging infrastructure development, creating new jobs.
 - A domestic EV supply chain can reduce import dependency and strengthen India's economic resilience.

Public Sector-Centric Subsidies & Private Sector Exclusion

- Historically, EV adoption in public transport has been driven by the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme.
- FAME I (2015-19) and FAME II (2019-24) focused on subsidies for state transport undertakings (STUs) and municipal corporations.
- However, private buses make up 93% of India's 24 lakh registered buses, but remain largely excluded from the subsidy structure.

Challenges for Private Bus Operators in EV Transition

- Financial Barriers
 - High upfront costs and lack of financing options hinder private investment.
 - EV loans have higher risk profiles due to low resale value of electric buses.
 - A study by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) suggests that interest subsidies, extended loan tenures, and credit guarantees could help overcome financing challenges.
- Limited Charging Infrastructure
- FAME-funded charging stations are largely restricted to public depots, limiting private sector access.
 - Private operators face high land and operational costs for installing dedicated charging infrastructure.
 - Land leasing issues, grid capacity constraints, and power supply reliability pose additional challenges.

Proposed Financial and Infrastructure Solutions

- Financial Incentives
 - Interest subsidies and extended loan tenures can reduce financial burdens for private operators.
 - Government-backed credit guarantees could reduce lending risks for financiers.
- Shared Charging Infrastructure
 - Developing public-access charging hubs in high-traffic zones and intercity corridors is critical.
 - PM E-DRIVE subsidies could support the development of charging stations accessible to private operators.
 - State governments could offer fiscal incentives or implement DBOT (Design-Build-Operate-Transfer) models for private participation in charging infrastructure.

Innovative Business Models for Electric Bus Adoption

Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS) Model

- The BaaS model separates battery ownership from vehicle ownership, reducing upfront costs.
- Countries like China and Kenya have successfully implemented battery swapping and leasing models.
- Companies like Macquarie's Vertelo are exploring similar solutions in India to improve financial feasibility for private EV operators.

Expanding Private Sector Participation in the PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- Including private operators is essential to meet India's target of 8,00,000 electric buses by 2030.
- A larger market scale would lower costs, improve efficiency, and accelerate India's shift to sustainable electric mobility.

Global Best Practices in Electric Bus Electrification

- China
 - Subsidies cover not only buses but also battery production and charging infrastructure.
 - Battery swapping technology allows operators to lease batteries instead of purchasing them.
- Europe
 - Green bonds, carbon credits, and low-interest loans finance EV adoption.
 - Public-private models help scale up charging infrastructure.
- United States
 - Municipal bonds, tax credits, and leasing models lower upfront EV costs.
 - Flexible financing models encourage private sector participation.
- South Korea and Japan
 - Shared bus charging depots provide public and private operators equal access.
 - Battery swapping technology ensures minimal downtime for electric buses.

Conclusion

- The PM E-DRIVE scheme is a crucial step toward India's electric mobility goals, but excluding private bus operators may limit its impact.
- Addressing financial barriers, improving charging infrastructure, and implementing innovative business models are key to ensuring comprehensive EV adoption.
- A balanced approach including both public and private operators is essential to achieve climate targets, reduce fossil fuel dependency, and accelerate India's transition to a sustainable transportation system.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Monitoring of Pesticide Residues in Food

General Studies-2; Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Introduction

- The call by Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare for a nationwide strategy to monitor pesticide residues in food is of immense significance in the context of public health and food safety in India.
- Contamination of food with pesticides is a serious health hazard, aggravated by commercial farming and indiscriminate use of chemicals.
- Despite several regulatory frameworks, gaps remain in monitoring, enforcement, and public awareness, necessitating stronger government intervention at both central and state levels.

Why Pesticide Residue Monitoring is Crucial

- Health Hazards of Pesticide Residues
 - Prolonged exposure to pesticide residues in food has been linked to cancer, neurological disorders, hormonal imbalance, reproductive issues, and immune suppression.
 - Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to these toxic chemicals.
 - Pesticides, when ingested over time, can bioaccumulate in the human body, leading to chronic illnesses.
- Environmental Impact
 - Pesticides contaminate soil, water bodies, and air, affecting biodiversity.
 - Persistence of banned pesticides in agricultural fields leads to long-term soil degradation.
 - Harmful chemicals used in farming can affect pollinators like bees, disrupting ecological balance and reducing crop yields.
- WHO and Global Concerns
 - The World Health Organization (WHO) has repeatedly warned about the presence of pesticide residues in food.
 - WHO highlights the long-term persistence of some pesticides in soil and water, causing irreversible damage to ecosystems and human health.
- Economic Consequences
 - Countries with high pesticide residues face export rejections, affecting India's agricultural economy.
 - Farmers dependent on chemical-intensive farming suffer from increasing input costs and soil depletion.
 - The rise in food-related illnesses leads to increased healthcare expenditure for both individuals and the government.

Challenges in Monitoring Pesticide Residues in Food

- Inadequate Infrastructure for Testing
 - India lacks sufficient testing laboratories with advanced technology to detect pesticide residues at a large scale.
 - Testing facilities are concentrated in urban areas, making it difficult to monitor rural agricultural produce.
- Weak Enforcement and Regulatory Gaps
 - The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, sets Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) for pesticides, but compliance is weak.
 - Many pesticides banned in other countries continue to be legally used in India.
- Widespread Adulteration in Food Products
 - Farmers and traders use chemical sprays to artificially ripen fruits (e.g., carbide in mangoes).
 - Harmful chemicals such as formalin are used to preserve fish and meat, exposing consumers to long-term health risks.
 - Milk, pulses, and vegetables are highly susceptible to contamination with chemicals used to enhance appearance and shelf life.

- Lack of Awareness Among Farmers and Consumers
 - Many farmers are unaware of safe pesticide use and continue to use highly toxic, banned chemicals.
 - Consumers lack knowledge about washing techniques or alternative solutions to minimize pesticide exposure.
 - Demand for organic food is growing, but its authenticity is questionable due to weak certification mechanisms.
- Corruption and Lack of Political Will
 - Testing and monitoring agencies suffer from corruption, allowing unsafe food products to enter the market.
 - Many businesses bypass regulations through bribery, making it difficult for authorities to ensure food safety.

Way Forward

- Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks
 - The Pesticide Management Bill, 2020, should be expedited and implemented rigorously to phase out harmful pesticides.
 - Review the list of approved pesticides and ban hazardous ones that have been prohibited in other countries.
 - Enhance collaboration between FSSAI, State Food Safety Departments, and Agricultural Universities to create a unified monitoring system.
- Expanding Testing Infrastructure
 - Increase certified food testing laboratories across states and ensure randomized checks on agricultural produce.
 - Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and blockchain to track pesticide usage in food supply chains.
 - Encourage private-sector participation in food testing by providing incentives for setting up modern testing labs.
- Promoting Safer Agricultural Practices
 - Provide subsidies for organic farming and incentivize farmers to shift to biopesticides and natural fertilizers.
 - Implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to reduce dependency on chemical pesticides.
 - Train farmers on safe pesticide application techniques, crop rotation, and sustainable farming methods.
- Public Awareness and Consumer Protection
 - Introduce mandatory labeling on food products indicating pesticide residues and their health impact.
 - Conduct nationwide awareness campaigns about washing and detoxifying food before consumption.
 - Strengthen consumer protection laws to allow legal action against food suppliers violating safety norms.
- Addressing Corruption and Strengthening Law Enforcement
 - Ensure strict penalties for businesses found guilty of pesticide adulteration.
 - Increase whistleblower protection for those exposing illegal pesticide use in food supply chains.
 - Improve coordination between state agencies to ensure uniform implementation of food safety laws.

Conclusion:

- The call by Union Minister for stricter monitoring mechanisms is a timely and necessary step.
- However, mere regulations will not be enough—a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach is required, involving government agencies, farmers, consumers, and the food industry.
- India, being an agrarian economy, must prioritize food safety not only for public health but also for economic growth and global competitiveness.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Universal Basic Income (UBI) in India

General Studies-3; Topic: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Introduction

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) has raised concerns about jobless growth, a trend exacerbated by automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Rising income inequality and unemployment in India have renewed discussions on Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a possible social safety net.

Background and Evolution of UBI in India

- UBI gained traction after the 2016-17 Economic Survey, which proposed its adoption as an alternative to inefficient welfare programs.
- The advancement of the JAM (Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) infrastructure has improved the feasibility of Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs), a key mechanism for UBI implementation.

UBI as a Social Safety Net

- UBI should be seen as a social protection mechanism, rather than a solution for employment generation or economic development.
- It ensures financial security for the vulnerable but does not directly address structural unemployment or economic stagnation.

Key Benefits of UBI

- Poverty Alleviation – Direct cash transfers provide a minimum income floor, helping the poor secure basic needs.
- Reduced Bureaucracy & Leakages – Universal transfers reduce intermediaries, lowering administrative costs and exclusion errors.
- Boost in Demand & Economic Growth – Increased purchasing power can stimulate consumption, particularly in economic downturns.
- Support for Vulnerable Groups – Provides financial stability for the elderly, disabled, and unemployed, who are often excluded from work-based welfare schemes.
- Human Capital Development – Guaranteed income encourages investment in education and healthcare, improving long-term development indicators.
- Mental Well-Being & Crime Reduction – Reducing financial insecurity may lower stress levels and crime rates, promoting social stability.

Feasibility vs. Desirability of UBI

- Feasibility Concern – India faces budgetary constraints, making full-scale UBI financially challenging.
- Desirability Aspect – UBI is desirable as a universal income support mechanism that can reduce inequality and offer a minimal consumption guarantee.
- A modified or targeted UBI could be explored to balance affordability and effectiveness.

Existing State and Central Cash Transfer Schemes

- State Initiatives:
 1. Rythu Bandhu (Telangana) – Unconditional financial aid to farmers.
 2. KALIA (Odisha) – Direct support to small and marginal farmers.
- Central Initiative: PM-KISAN – ₹6,000 per year for farmers, targeting 10 crore agricultural households.
- Challenges: Inclusion and exclusion errors due to logistical hurdles (e.g., Aadhaar authentication failures, banking issues).

Financial Viability of UBI in India

- Large-scale UBI models suggest costs ranging from 3.5% to 11% of GDP, necessitating either:
 - Reallocation of funds from existing welfare programs, or
 - Increased taxation or fiscal deficit expansion.
- A limited UBI pegged at 1% of GDP could provide approximately ₹144 per month per individual, which, though small, could be gradually expanded.

Key Challenges in Implementing UBI

- High Fiscal Burden – Providing universal income is costly, and financing options remain unclear.
- Replacement of Welfare Programs – Replacing PDS or MGNREGS with UBI could hurt the most vulnerable populations.
- Inflationary Risks – Cash transfers could drive inflation, particularly in rural areas where supply constraints
- Work Disincentive – Concerns that assured income might discourage people from participating in the labor force.
- Technological & Logistical Barriers – Biometric failures and banking infrastructure gaps could exclude beneficiaries, as seen in schemes like PM-KISAN.
- No Long-Term Structural Impact – While UBI addresses immediate poverty, it does not resolve fundamental issues like education, healthcare, and job creation.

Way Forward

- Targeted Implementation – A full-scale UBI may not be feasible; a gradual rollout for vulnerable groups (e.g., women, elderly, disabled, landless laborers) is more practical.
- Integration with Existing Welfare Schemes – Instead of replacing MGNREGS and PDS, UBI should complement these programs for a more inclusive safety net.
- Leveraging JAM Infrastructure – Strengthening Aadhaar-linked bank transfers and improving rural banking access will ensure efficient distribution.
- Combining UBI with Job Creation Policies – UBI alone cannot resolve unemployment; it must be paired with industrial and skill-development policies.

Conclusion

- UBI has strong potential to reduce poverty and inequality, but its large-scale implementation is financially challenging.
- A modified and phased UBI, in combination with existing social welfare programs, could provide a balanced approach, ensuring economic security without excessive fiscal pressure.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Niti Aayog's Report: 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Universities'

General Studies-2; Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Introduction

- Niti Aayog's recent report, 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Universities,' critically examines the challenges and opportunities within India's higher education system, particularly focusing on state universities.
- It provides a roadmap to improve quality, accessibility, and global competitiveness while addressing funding and governance issues.

Importance of State Universities in India's Higher Education Landscape

- State universities account for nearly 80% of India's higher education institutions and cater to the majority of students.
- These institutions play a crucial role in regional development, equity, and inclusion by providing access to education in diverse socio-economic and geographic settings.
- The quality of education in state universities significantly impacts India's overall academic and research output.

Key Issues Identified in the Report

- Inadequate Investment and Poor Spending Patterns
 - The report highlights the lack of adequate financial investment in state universities.
 - There is significant disparity among states in terms of expenditure on higher education.
 - States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu rank high in spending, while Karnataka, despite having the highest college density and a high gross enrolment ratio, has relatively lower spending.
 - The need for strategic allocation of funds and effective utilization is emphasized to ensure equitable educational growth.
- Declining Financial Support for Education
 - Over the years, the financial support for higher education from states has steadily declined.
 - States lack the resources to implement reforms recommended in the report.
 - The central government's intervention is suggested to improve funding mechanisms and streamline investment.
- Quality of Higher Education
 - State universities have failed to achieve global competitiveness due to lack of infrastructure, faculty development, and research output.
 - India's top-tier institutions, including IITs, do not rank among the best in the world, indicating systemic weaknesses.
 - There is a need to bridge the gap between education and research by enhancing research capabilities within universities.
- Governance Challenges
 - Political interference in the administration of state universities affects autonomy and decision-making.
 - The role of regulatory bodies such as UGC and AICTE has been contentious, with recent guidelines seen as an attempt by the central government to take control of state universities.
 - University administration requires autonomy and minimal external intervention to foster academic excellence.

Key Recommendations of the Report

- Enhancing Research Capabilities
 - Establishment of Centres of Excellence aligned with a national research policy.
 - Creation of research universities to bridge the gap between education and innovation.
 - Funding for research should be prioritized, and collaborations with international institutions should be encouraged.
- Improving Pedagogy and Multidisciplinary Education
 - Promotion of interdisciplinary studies to encourage holistic learning and research.
 - Integration of new-age learning methodologies such as digital tools, experiential learning, and competency-based assessment.
 - Continuous faculty development programs to improve teaching quality and industry-relevant skill development.
- Strengthening Financial Support
 - States should allocate a higher percentage of GDP towards higher education.
 - Encouraging public-private partnerships (PPP) to enhance infrastructure and resources.
 - Implementation of performance-linked funding models to ensure effective utilization of resources.
- Setting Performance Indicators
 - The report outlines over 120 performance success indicators to measure educational outcomes.
 - Short-, medium-, and long-term policies have been recommended to track progress in higher education.
 - Periodic reviews of universities' performance should be conducted based on these indicators.
- Autonomy and Governance Reforms
 - State universities should have academic and administrative autonomy to function effectively.
 - Decentralization of decision-making to avoid excessive political interference.
 - Strengthening accreditation and ranking systems to ensure accountability and improve quality benchmarks.

Challenges in Implementation

- Financial Constraints
 - Many states lack adequate financial resources to implement the proposed recommendations.
 - Alternative funding models, such as CSR contributions, need to be explored.
- Political Interference
 - Political influence over university administration affects merit-based decision-making.
 - The need for insulation of academic institutions from political pressures is emphasized.
- Need for Capacity Building
 - Faculty shortages and lack of industry exposure hinder educational excellence.
 - More investment is required in training programs and industry collaborations.

Conclusion

- The Niti Aayog report presents a comprehensive roadmap for improving state universities, which constitute the backbone of India's higher education system.
- Only through collective efforts from both central and state governments can India's higher education sector achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Supreme Court's Ruling on Online Child Sexual Abuse

General Studies-1; Topic: Salient features of Indian Society

Introduction:

- The Supreme Court's recent judgment on online child sexual abuse is a landmark step in addressing the exploitation of children in the digital space.
- The ruling expands criminal liability for downloading and storing Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM), tackling the demand side of child abuse content.
- It reinforces India's commitment to child protection and aligns with global conventions against online child exploitation.

Background

- In January 2024, the Madras High Court ruled that merely watching or downloading child pornography was not a crime, raising widespread concerns.
- The decision weakened the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, potentially normalizing the viewing of child abuse material.
- In September 2024, the Supreme Court overturned this ruling, redefining online child exploitation as a grave criminal offense and strengthening the legal framework against it.

Key Highlights of the Supreme Court Judgment

- Reframing the Narrative
 - The court replaced the term "child porn" with CSEAM, highlighting the seriousness of the crime and ensuring a victim-centric approach.
- Criminalization of Downloading and Storing CSEAM
 - Mere possession of child sexual abuse material is now a punishable offense, creating a deterrent effect and reducing demand.
- Holding Social Media Platforms Accountable
 - Intermediaries must report CSEAM cases to law enforcement in real-time, ensuring better tracking and removal of content.
- Addressing Long-Term Impact on Victims
 - The court recognized that online sexual abuse images cause continuous harm, as victims suffer re-victimization each time the content resurfaces.
- Strengthening India's International Commitments
 - The ruling aligns with India's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which mandates the protection of children from exploitation, including online abuse.

Constitutional Provisions Supporting Child Protection

- Article 21: Right to Life and Dignity
 - Guarantees the right to life and protection from exploitation.
 - The ruling reinforces that online sexual abuse violates a child's dignity and safety under Article 21.
- Article 15(3): Special Provisions for Children
 - Empowers the State to create protective laws for child welfare.
 - POCSO Act, 2012 derives its legal strength from this provision.
- Article 39(e) and (f) (Directive Principles of State Policy)
 - Mandates the State to protect children from abuse and ensure their healthy development.
 - The judgment upholds the State's duty to protect children from digital exploitation.

Legal Framework Against Online Child Sexual Abuse

- POCSO Act, 2012
 - Criminalizes all forms of child sexual abuse, including the creation, distribution, and storage of CSEAM.
- Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000
 - Addresses cybercrimes and electronic distribution of child sexual abuse material.
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
 - Includes child-friendly provisions and special protection for victims of abuse.

Challenges in Enforcing the Judgment

- Encryption and Tech Barriers
 - End-to-end encryption in messaging apps hinders law enforcement from detecting and intercepting CSEAM.
- AI-Generated Abuse Content
 - Deepfake technology creates synthetic child abuse material, making it harder to detect and prosecute offenders.
- Global Spread of CSEAM
 - Cross-border digital networks make tracking and removing CSEAM challenging.
 - Social media companies headquartered abroad complicate international cooperation in law enforcement.
- Lack of Skilled Cybercrime Experts
 - Shortage of forensic experts and cybercrime investigators limits the ability to enforce the judgment effectively.
- Need for Victim Rehabilitation
 - Most laws focus on punishing offenders but lack provisions for psychological and social rehabilitation of victims.

Way Forward

- Clear Definition of Cybercrime and CSEAM
 - Indian laws should explicitly define cybercrimes, including AI-generated child sexual abuse content, as an organized crime.
- Strengthening Accountability of Social Media Platforms
 - Mandate real-time reporting of CSEAM cases to law enforcement.
 - Enforce stricter compliance mechanisms for content monitoring.
- Establishing a Forensic Lab for CSEAM
 - A dedicated forensic lab should be set up to analyze, track, and prevent CSEAM distribution.
- Creating a National Database of Sexual Offenders
 - Offenders involved in downloading and distributing CSEAM should be registered in a national database.
 - Such individuals should be barred from jobs involving children.

International Cooperation for a Global Response

- Recognizing CSEAM as a Global Threat
 - The multi-billion-dollar industry of online child abuse requires global intervention.
- Establishing a Global Convention
 - A legally binding international agreement should streamline cooperation between law enforcement agencies worldwide.
- Creating an International Sex Offender Registry
 - A global database of convicted sex offenders would aid in tracking and preventing cross-border offenses.

Conclusion

- The Supreme Court's ruling is a turning point in India's fight against online child sexual abuse.
- It ensures stronger legal protections for children while holding offenders and online platforms accountable.
- A comprehensive approach, including legal reforms, technological innovation, and international collaboration, is necessary to combat the growing CSEAM industry and safeguard children's rights.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



India-Qatar Relations

General Studies-2; Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Introduction

- India and Qatar have witnessed a significant expansion and deepening of their bilateral relationship, culminating in the recent state visit of Qatar's Amir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, to India.
- The visit marked a crucial moment in India-Qatar ties as both nations elevated their relationship to a strategic partnership, signed key agreements, and explored avenues for economic, energy, and diplomatic cooperation.

Evolution of India-Qatar Relations

- India's engagement with the Gulf region has always been multidimensional, encompassing economic, cultural, and people-to-people Qatar, as a key Gulf nation, holds a special position due to:
 - Its geostrategic location in the Middle East.
 - Its strong ties with Western powers as well as regional players including Israel and Afghanistan.
 - Its dominance in the LNG market, serving as a crucial energy supplier to India.
- India has consistently prioritized relations with the Gulf, with the Prime Minister giving special attention to strengthening ties.
- India's External Affairs Minister's three visits to Qatar in the last nine months further emphasize the diplomatic importance India assigns to the relationship.

Key Outcomes of the Amir's Visit

During Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani's visit, several crucial agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed. The major takeaways include:

- Strategic Partnership**
 - India and Qatar agreed to elevate their ties to a "strategic partnership," signifying deeper cooperation across multiple domains, including energy security, trade, and investment.
 - The move aligns Qatar with India's other strategic Gulf partners such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait under the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- Economic and Trade Cooperation**
 - Both nations agreed to double bilateral trade from \$14 billion to \$28 billion in the next five years.
 - Qatar committed \$10 billion in new investments in India, focusing on infrastructure, energy, and technology sectors.
 - The two sides signed agreements covering economic cooperation, youth affairs, and double taxation avoidance, which are expected to ease business activities and investments.
- Energy Cooperation**
 - A major agreement was signed between QatarEnergy and India's Petronet LNG, extending their LNG supply deal for 20 years—the largest-ever such agreement.
 - This move secures India's long-term energy needs, diversifies energy sources, and ensures stable pricing for LNG imports.

- Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Possibilities**
 - Discussions were held on a potential India-Qatar Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to enhance trade relations by providing mutual market access.
 - Qatar already has free trade agreements with countries like China, so a similar deal with India could increase trade and investment.
 - However, India must ensure that an FTA does not lead to dumping of goods by third-party nations via Qatar, which could harm Indian manufacturers.
- Resolution of Diplomatic Setback**
 - Bilateral relations had experienced a strain following the arrest and sentencing of eight former Indian Navy personnel in Qatar on espionage charges in 2022.
 - The Amir of Qatar pardoned the individuals, which significantly improved diplomatic goodwill between the two nations.
 - This resolution removed a major roadblock and reinforced trust in bilateral relations.

Challenges and Way Forward

Despite the positive trajectory, some challenges remain in India-Qatar relations:

- Economic and Trade Barriers**
 - Non-tariff barriers and bureaucratic hurdles slow down business transactions.
 - Limited Qatari investments in India compared to other Gulf nations, despite Qatar's large sovereign wealth fund.
 - India must encourage greater Qatari participation in sectors like infrastructure, startups, and energy exploration.
- Political and Security Risks**
 - The volatile security situation in the Middle East, including tensions between Iran and Israel, impacts India's energy supply chains.
 - Any diplomatic tensions between Qatar and its Gulf neighbours (such as the past GCC-Qatar rift) could indirectly impact India's trade interests.
- Labor and Migration Issues**
 - India must continue to advocate for better working conditions and legal protections for Indian workers in Qatar.
 - Ensuring seamless remittance flows and social security benefits for Indian expatriates is crucial.

Conclusion

- Despite recent political shifts and diplomatic challenges, India and Bangladesh have strong historical and economic ties that should not be jeopardized.
- Mutual respect, open dialogue, and pragmatic collaboration are essential to ensuring a stable and prosperous future for both nations.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Impact of US Reciprocal Tariffs on Indian Manufacturing

General Studies-2; Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Introduction

- Indian manufacturing faces a new challenge from US President Donald Trump's proposed reciprocal tariffs.
- Despite efforts like 'Make in India', the manufacturing sector's share in GDP declined from 15.99% in 2014-15 to 15.83% in 2023-24, highlighting stagnation.
- The US is India's largest export partner, and these tariffs could have severe economic consequences.

Understanding Reciprocal Tariffs and Their Impact on Indian Exports

- Reciprocal tariffs are imposed when a country charges duties on US exports, prompting the US to retaliate with the same amount of tariff on that country's goods.
- While the exact calculation method remains unclear, past tariffs under Trump's presidency suggest high tariff rates targeting specific sectors.
- The US administration's tariff plan covers major Indian export industries:
- Steel and Aluminium: Already hit by a 25% tariff on steel and aluminium.
- Pharmaceuticals: India is the largest supplier of generic drugs to the US.
- Textiles and Apparel: Competes with Bangladesh, Vietnam, and China.
- Electronics: India's growing electronics exports could lose market share.
- Consequences of Reciprocal Tariffs:
 - Increased export costs → Reduced competitiveness.
 - Shrinking market share → Higher competition from other countries.
 - Supply chain disruptions → Higher input costs for industries like automobiles.
 - Job losses → Manufacturing slowdown, impacting employment.

Industry-Wise Impact of US Tariffs

Steel and Aluminium Industry

- Effect: Higher costs make Indian exports uncompetitive in the US, leading to:
 - Declining orders and lower revenue.
 - Job cuts in steel plants and allied industries.
 - Downstream impact on industries using metals (automobiles, machinery).

Pharmaceutical Sector

- Higher tariffs mean:
 - Increased production costs → Lower profit margins.
 - Shift in sourcing → US firms may turn to China or Mexico.
 - Slower growth in India's pharma exports.

Textile Industry

- India's textile and apparel exports to the US could see:
 - Rising costs making Indian garments less competitive.
 - Loss of orders to Vietnam and Bangladesh, which enjoy better trade agreements.
 - Employment crisis in the textile hubs of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.

Electronics Industry

- India has been focusing on electronics manufacturing, but:
 - Higher tariffs on electronic exports will discourage investments.
 - US companies may prefer China, Taiwan, or Vietnam over India.
 - Smartphone and semiconductor exports could be hit.

Impact on India's Domestic Economy

- Declining Export Revenues
 - Trade imbalance may widen due to reduced exports to the US.
 - Lower foreign exchange earnings → Increased pressure on currency value.
- Reduced Investments in Manufacturing
 - Uncertainty in trade policies discourages investment in export-oriented industries.
 - FDI in manufacturing may slow down as companies fear trade restrictions.
- Employment Crisis in Key Sectors
 - Manufacturing is labour-intensive, and export-oriented industries employ millions.
 - Job losses could occur in:
 - a. Steel plants (Odisha, Jharkhand).
 - b. Textile hubs (Tamil Nadu, Gujarat).
 - c. Pharma industries (Telangana, Maharashtra).
 - d. Electronics sector (Noida, Bengaluru).

Way Forward

- Reducing dependence on the US by:
 - Strengthening trade ties with the EU, which is India's second-largest trade partner.
 - Expanding agreements with ASEAN nations for regional market access.
 - Exploring emerging markets in Africa and Latin America.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India) should focus on:
 - Advanced manufacturing techniques to increase global competitiveness.
 - Higher R&D investment in technology-driven industries.
 - Subsidies for domestic firms to absorb cost hikes.
- Expedite trade deals with:
 - EU – Ongoing India-EU FTA negotiations should be fast-tracked.
 - UK, Australia, Canada – Potential export markets for textiles, electronics, and pharma.
- Government incentives to boost local manufacturing:
 - Higher tax exemptions to increase consumer purchasing power.
 - Lower interest rates for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
 - Stronger support for MSMEs, which are major exporters.
- Providing financial relief measures, such as:
 - Subsidized credit for export-oriented businesses.
 - Export incentive programs under Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes.
 - Tax relief for industries facing tariff challenges.

Conclusion

- Trump's reciprocal tariffs pose a serious threat to India's manufacturing and exports.
- With strategic economic planning, India can mitigate trade shocks and emerge as a stronger global manufacturing hub.
- The Make in India 2.0 strategy should focus on resilience, technology, and diversification to position India for long-term growth in a volatile global trade environment.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Wetland Conservation

General Studies-3; Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Introduction

- The Meghalaya High Court, through a suo motu Public Interest Litigation (PIL), has taken up the conservation of wetlands in the state, highlighting the significance of these fragile ecosystems.
- The move by the High Court aligns with national and international efforts, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971), which focuses on wetland conservation.

Wetland Conservation

- Wetlands are one of the most productive ecosystems and provide critical ecological services such as water purification, groundwater recharge, flood control, and biodiversity support.
- World Wetland Day (February 2), observed globally, aims to increase awareness about wetland conservation.
- The theme for 2024, "Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future", reinforces their importance for sustainable development.

Wetlands and Their Global Significance

- Wetlands as Critical Ecosystems
 - Wetlands constitute 6% of the Earth's surface.
 - They provide 40.6% of global ecosystem services, making them crucial for biodiversity and climate regulation.
 - Serve as carbon sinks, reducing the impacts of climate change.
 - Act as natural flood buffers by absorbing excess water.
 - Support fisheries, agriculture, and livelihoods for millions of people.
- Global Decline of Wetlands
 - Over 50% of wetlands lost since 1900 due to human activities.
 - Between 1970 and 2015, 35% of global wetland area declined.
 - The Wetland Extent Trends (WET) index shows an annual loss of 0.78%, which is three times faster than the loss of natural forests.

Threats to Wetlands

- Anthropogenic Pressures
 - Urbanization & Industrialization: Expanding cities and industries lead to encroachments and pollution.
 - Agricultural Expansion: Wetlands are drained for farming, leading to habitat loss.
 - Infrastructure Development: Roads, dams, and ports disrupt wetland ecosystems.
 - Pollution: Industrial effluents, sewage, and solid waste degrade water quality.
- Climate Change Impacts
 - Rising temperatures alter wetland hydrology, leading to habitat loss.
 - Unpredictable rainfall affects wetland-dependent species.
 - Sea level rise threatens coastal wetlands like mangroves and estuaries.
 - Extreme weather events such as cyclones and floods degrade wetland ecosystems.

Conservation Efforts: International & National Context

- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971)
 - The only global treaty focused on wetland conservation.
 - COP14 (2022) held in Wuhan and Geneva emphasized:
 - a. Integration of wetland conservation with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - b. Collaboration with climate change policies (IPCC, UNFCCC).
 - c. Alignment with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
- India's Wetland Conservation Framework
 - India is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention.
 - The National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) provides financial and technical support for wetland conservation.
- Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017:
 - Prohibit conversion of wetlands for non-wetland uses.
 - Establish State Wetland Authorities (SWA) for conservation.
 - As of 2023, India has 75 Ramsar sites, covering 1.33 million hectares.

Meghalaya High Court's Suo Motu PIL: A Landmark Initiative

- Rationale Behind the PIL
 - Meghalaya has rich wetland ecosystems that play a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity and water security.
 - Increased encroachments, mining, and unregulated tourism have threatened these wetlands.
 - The court intervened to ensure conservation measures are enforced effectively.
- Key Directives Issued
 - Creation of a Wetland Authority to oversee conservation.
 - Mapping and identification of wetlands in Meghalaya.
 - Strict regulation of encroachments and commercial activities.
 - Awareness programs to educate communities about wetland protection.

Way Forward

- Policy Interventions
 - Enforce Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 more effectively.
 - Strengthen Ramsar site monitoring to prevent degradation.
 - Implement the Fifth Ramsar Strategic Plan for global collaboration.
- Community Participation & Traditional Knowledge
 - Involve local communities in conservation efforts.
 - Utilize indigenous knowledge for sustainable wetland management.
 - Promote eco-tourism to generate revenue while preserving wetlands.
- Scientific & Technological Approaches
 - Use of GIS & Remote Sensing to monitor wetland changes.
 - Develop Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) such as wetland restoration projects.
 - Enhance carbon sequestration efforts through wetland conservation.
- Climate Resilience & Adaptation
 - Incorporate wetlands into disaster risk reduction strategies.
 - Promote afforestation of mangroves and peatlands to enhance carbon storage.
 - Integrate wetlands in urban planning for sustainable cities.

Conclusion

- The suo motu PIL by the Meghalaya High Court is a crucial step toward wetland conservation in India.
- India must integrate legal, scientific, and community-based approaches to safeguard its wetlands.
- Strengthening wetland governance and international cooperation is essential to achieving sustainable development and climate resilience.

Source : Anonymous

THE SEMI- ANNUAL BREEF 6 MONTHS



THE SEMI-ANNUAL BRIEF

News Headlines

General Studies Paper-1

MAHAKUMBH 2025

- Millions Gather for Holy Dip as Mahakumbh 2025 Begins in Prayagraj

Focus of the Month

INTRODUCTION

Mahakumbh 2025 is the world's largest religious gathering, set to take place in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. This sacred event, which occurs every 12 years, attracts millions of devotees, saints, and tourists from around the world. It is a time of spiritual renewal, devotion, and cultural celebration, with ritualistic bathing in the holy rivers believed to cleanse sins and grant moksha (liberation).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Kumbh Mela has its roots in ancient Hindu traditions and mythology. The legend of Samudra Manthan (churning of the ocean) narrates how gods and demons fought over Amrit (nectar of immortality), and a few drops spilled at four locations—Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik—where the Kumbh Mela is held in rotation. Mahakumbh, the most significant of them, takes place only in Prayagraj every 12 years. The first documented mention of the Kumbh Mela dates back to the 7th century, when Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang described a grand Hindu gathering in India.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF MAHAKUMBH 2025

1. Sacred Rituals and Spiritual Significance

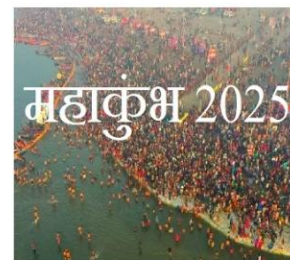
Shahi Snan (Royal Bathing): The most important event where different sects (akhadas) of saints take ceremonial dips in the river Ganga, led by revered sadhus and Naga sadhus. Kalpavas: Devotees, known as Kalpavasis, stay at the banks of the Ganga for a month, living a life of simplicity, prayers, and meditation. Yajnas and Pujas: Special fire rituals, prayers, and mantra recitations for world peace and spiritual growth.

2. Cultural and Religious Gatherings

Discourses and Sermons: Spiritual leaders, saints, and scholars deliver teachings on Hindu philosophy, dharma, and life principles. Sant Sammelans: Meetings of saints and religious leaders to discuss spiritual and social issues. Bhajan-Kirtan and Folk Performances: Devotional singing, music, and dance performances reflecting India's rich cultural heritage.

3. Infrastructure and Facilities for Pilgrims

Temporary City Setup: A well-planned tent city with sanitation, medical facilities, and accommodations for millions of visitors. Technology Integration: Digital maps, online registrations, live broadcasting, and AI-driven crowd management for safety and convenience. Eco-Friendly Initiatives: Use of biodegradable materials, waste management programs, and water conservation measures to maintain environmental sustainability.



4. Security and Crowd Management

Multi-Layered Security Arrangements: Deployment of police, paramilitary forces, and CCTV surveillance for crowd control. Disaster Management Plans: Emergency response teams, medical camps, and drone monitoring to handle large crowds and unexpected situations.

Editorial Section

INTRODUCTION

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, held in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, from January 13 to February 26, 2025, stood as a testament to India's rich spiritual heritage. Recognized as the world's largest religious gathering, this event attracted over 660 million pilgrims, marking a significant moment in the Hindu religious calendar.

HISTORICAL AND ASTROLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Kumbh Mela is rooted in Hindu mythology, symbolizing the eternal struggle between gods and demons over the nectar of immortality. The 2025 Maha Kumbh was particularly special due to a rare celestial alignment that occurs once every 144 years, enhancing its spiritual significance.

SACRED RITUALS AND BATHING DATES

Central to the festival are the Shahi Snan (royal baths), where devotees immerse themselves at the Triveni Sangam—the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers. Key bathing dates included:

- Pausa Purnima (January 13): Inaugural bath.
- Makar Sankranti (January 14): First Shahi Snan.
- Mauni Amavasya (January 29): Considered the most auspicious day.
- Vasant Panchami (February 3): Celebration of knowledge and learning.
- Magha Purnima (February 12): Full moon bath.
- Maha Shivaratri (February 26): Concluding bath.

These rituals are believed to cleanse sins and aid in attaining moksha (liberation).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICAL PLANNING

To accommodate the massive influx of pilgrims, a temporary city spanning 4,000 hectares was established, featuring:

- Approximately 150,000 tents for accommodation.
- 12 km of ghats (riverfront steps) for bathing.
- 1850 hectares of parking facilities.
- Over 450 km of internal roads.
- 30 pontoon bridges for connectivity.

Advanced technologies, including AI-powered surveillance and underwater drones, were deployed to ensure safety and manage the vast crowds.

CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Maha Kumbh Mela is not only a religious event but also a cultural extravaganza, showcasing India's diverse traditions through music, dance, and art. Economically, the 2025 festival was projected to generate over ₹2 lakh crore in revenue, significantly boosting the local and state economy.

CHALLENGES AND SAFETY MEASURES

Despite meticulous planning, the event faced challenges, including a tragic stampede on January 29, resulting in several casualties. To mitigate such risks, authorities implemented:

- Deployment of over 40,000 police personnel.
- Installation of 2,300 surveillance cameras.
- Establishment of 10 lost and found centers.
- Launch of a mobile application for real-time assistance.

CONCLUSION

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 exemplified the profound spiritual fervor and organizational prowess of India. Beyond its religious significance, the festival highlighted the nation's ability to manage large-scale events, reflecting a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL BRIEF

News Headlines

General Studies Paper-2

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- **Strategic Autonomy in Motion: India Redefines Partnerships Amid Global Realignments**

Focus of the Month

INDIA-U.S. RELATIONS: STRATEGIC BALANCE IN A SHIFTING WORLD ORDER

As global diplomacy becomes more layered and multipolar, India's relationship with the United States has taken center stage — shaped not just by bilateral interests, but by a series of events unfolding across continents. From the Gulf to the Pacific, and from Eastern Europe to Africa, India's moves reflect both careful independence and subtle alignment with U.S. values and priorities.

♦ GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS SHAPING INDIA-U.S. TIES:

► **India-Qatar Relations:**

After the diplomatic turbulence over the arrest of Indian Navy veterans, relations with Qatar are stabilizing. India is strengthening its position through energy security, economic diplomacy, and people-to-people ties. The U.S., a key player in the Gulf, plays a quiet but relevant backdrop in supporting regional stability.

► **Defence Cooperation with New Zealand:**

India's increasing military and strategic cooperation with New Zealand indicates a deepening Indo-Pacific agenda. This not only supports maritime security but also reflects growing convergence with U.S. allies in the region.

► **U.S.-Russia Letter Diplomacy:**

Tensions between Washington and Moscow are escalating, with direct communication and strategic messaging intensifying. India, while maintaining traditional ties with Russia, is seen more frequently engaging with the U.S. on multilateral platforms — a sign of quiet rebalancing.

► **Gaza Ceasefire Developments:**

India has adopted a nuanced position on the Israel-Palestine conflict. While advocating for peace and humanitarian access, its statements often reflect a tone compatible with the U.S. approach, blending realism with responsibility.

► **PRC-Congo-Rwanda Tensions:**

China's growing influence in Africa and its involvement in the Congo-Rwanda crisis are raising global concern. India, an emerging partner across African states, is likely to engage more proactively — a move that could complement U.S. goals in counterbalancing China.



Editorial Section

INTRODUCTION

In today's multipolar world, the art of diplomacy lies in knowing when to speak, when to act – and when to simply observe. India has mastered this craft, increasingly emerging as a bridge between competing powers while firmly protecting its own interests. This month, a series of global developments shows just how nuanced this positioning has become.

► **Balancing the Gulf:**

The quiet mending of ties with Qatar signals India's agility in regional diplomacy. Once under pressure, New Delhi's renewed engagement highlights its commitment to energy ties and Gulf cooperation – all while the U.S. continues to play a stabilizing role in the background.

► **Pacific Presence Grows:**

Through its defense collaboration with New Zealand, India is expanding its reach across the Indo-Pacific – not in isolation, but in subtle coordination with the strategic vision shared by the U.S., Australia, and Japan. It reflects India's growing comfort in the circle of democratic maritime partners.

► **Navigating East-West Tensions:**

The resurfacing of friction between the U.S. and Russia places India in a familiar but evolving dilemma. While Russia remains a defense partner, India's increasing proximity to the West is unmistakable – evident in joint exercises, technology sharing, and security dialogues.

► **A Soft Voice for Peace:**

India's carefully worded support for a Gaza ceasefire speaks volumes. Rather than choosing sides, it amplifies a voice of restraint – one that aligns with humanitarian principles and resonates with U.S.-led calls for de-escalation, without risking diplomatic equity in the region.

► **Eyes on Africa:**

India is not ignoring China's deeper play in Africa. As the PRC-Congo-Rwanda situation unfolds, India's interests – from development partnerships to mineral security – align more closely with U.S. concerns. This presents an opportunity for deeper trilateral cooperation in the continent.

FINAL THOUGHT:

India is walking a tightrope – not of indecision, but of deliberate balance. This month's developments reaffirm that India-U.S. relations are not about alignment, but about convergence. As India steps further onto the world stage, it chooses partnerships not out of pressure, but out of purpose.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL BRIEF

News Headlines

General Studies Paper-2

75TH CONSTITUTION DAY

- **India Celebrates 75th Constitution Day with National Pride and Renewed Commitment to Democratic Values**

Focus of the Month

INTRODUCTION

The 75th Constitution Day of India, observed on 26th November 2024, marked a landmark celebration of the adoption of the Indian Constitution—a document that has guided the world's largest democracy since 1950. The platinum jubilee observance was not just ceremonial but deeply reflective, emphasizing India's constitutional journey, legal evolution, and democratic resilience. National events, educational campaigns, digital initiatives, and public awareness drives were held across the country to foster civic consciousness and commemorate the values enshrined in the Constitution: justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas) commemorates the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly of India on 26 November 1949, which came into effect on 26 January 1950. The Constitution of India, drafted under the chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, is the longest written constitution in the world and serves as the foundational document for the governance of the Republic of India.

The idea of Constitution Day was reintroduced in 2015 by the Government of India to honor the memory of Dr. Ambedkar and promote constitutional values among citizens. The 75th edition carried special significance, marking three-quarters of a century of India's constitutional democracy.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF CONSTITUTION DAY 2024

1. National Events and Celebrations

- Joint Parliamentary Session: A special session of Parliament was held where President Droupadi Murmu addressed both Houses, calling for renewed commitment to constitutional morality.
- Mass Reading of the Preamble: Schools, colleges, government offices, and public institutions conducted synchronized readings of the Preamble.
- Digital Outreach: The Ministry of Law & Justice launched an interactive digital platform, *Samvidhan@75, offering multimedia content, quizzes, and videos about the Constitution.

2. Exhibitions and Public Awareness

- Exhibition at Parliament Museum: A month-long exhibit showcased rare constitutional drafts, original speeches of Ambedkar, and visual records from the Constituent Assembly debates.
- Mobile Constitution Vans: These vans traveled across rural and urban India, bringing legal literacy and constitutional education to remote corners.

3. Youth Engagement and Education

- Essay and Debate Competitions: Nationwide contests were held in educational institutions on themes like "Constitution as the Soul of Democracy" and "Rights and Duties in a Modern India."
- Model Constituent Assembly Sessions: Simulated sessions were conducted in universities to allow students to relive the process of drafting the Constitution.



4. Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms Focus

- The Supreme Court launched a 'Digital Justice Kendra' for virtual legal aid in regional languages.
- A nationwide symposium was organized on 'The Future of Indian Judiciary Challenges and Innovations*', discussing judicial accountability, pendency, and AI in courtrooms.

5. International Participation

- Delegations from Commonwealth nations and constitutional scholars from around the world were invited to a Global Constitution Summit in New Delhi, which discussed comparative constitutionalism and democratic backsliding.

Editorial Section

INTRODUCTION

The 75th Constitution Day was more than a celebration—it was a solemn tribute to India’s democratic roots and a reflection on the journey that began in 1949. As the nation commemorated this momentous milestone, the atmosphere across the country was one of pride, introspection, and hopeful determination.

THE DEMOCRATIC LEGACY

India’s Constitution, envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar and crafted by some of the most brilliant legal and political minds, has not only withstood the test of time but has evolved with it. It has absorbed over 100 amendments and continues to remain relevant in the face of rapid social and political transformation. The platinum jubilee provided a moment to appreciate this adaptability. It also prompted the nation to revisit core principles—secularism, federalism, social justice, and fundamental rights—amid emerging debates around civil liberties, media freedom, and judicial independence.

CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

One of the key themes of this year’s celebration was to strengthen civic education and awareness of constitutional duties. The Constitution is not just a legal document; it is a social contract between the state and the citizen. Workshops, village sabhas, and interactive platforms highlighted lesser-known aspects of the Constitution and emphasized responsibilities like environmental protection, respect for women, and promoting harmony.

TECHNOLOGY, LAW, AND FUTURE TRAJECTORIES

As India enters its digital decade, the integration of technology with governance, justice delivery, and civic education has become vital. The 75th Constitution Day saw meaningful discussions on:

- AI and Legal Ethics
- Data Protection vs. Right to Privacy
- Digital Democracy and Cybersecurity

This was not only a celebration of the past but a strategic orientation toward the Constitution of the future.

CHALLENGES AND CONSTITUTIONAL VIGILANCE

However, the jubilee also came amid challenges: debates on sedition laws, electoral reforms, judicial vacancies, and freedom of speech. Civil society leaders and former judges emphasized the need for constant constitutional vigilance to prevent majoritarian excesses and preserve the spirit of checks and balances.

CONCLUSION

The 75th Constitution Day served as both a celebration and a reminder—a celebration of what has been achieved, and a reminder of the ideals we must continue to strive for. As India moves forward, its Constitution remains the compass, guiding the republic through complexities with a resolve rooted in justice, equality, and liberty.

In the words of Dr. Ambedkar: “However good a Constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad. However bad a Constitution may be, if those implementing it are good, it will prove to be good.” This message echoed through the platinum jubilee, urging every citizen to live by the Constitution not just in law, but in spirit.

Elaborate in more detail.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL BRIEF

News Headlines

General Studies Paper-2

APPOINTMENT OF CJI

- Justice Sanjiv Khanna Appointed as the 51st Chief Justice of India.

Focus of the Month

INTRODUCTION

In a defining moment for the Indian judiciary, Justice Sanjiv Khanna has been appointed as the 51st Chief Justice of India (CJI), assuming office after the retirement of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud. He will serve in this esteemed position until May 13, 2025, overseeing the Supreme Court during a period marked by pressing legal, constitutional, and administrative challenges. His appointment reaffirms the continuity of the judiciary's commitment to constitutional supremacy, judicial integrity, and social justice.

JUDICIAL JOURNEY AND BACKGROUND

Justice Khanna was born on May 14, 1960, into a distinguished legal family. His father, Justice Dev Raj Khanna, served on the bench of the Delhi High Court, and his uncle, Justice Hans Raj Khanna, remains one of the most respected figures in Indian legal history. Justice H.R. Khanna is best remembered for his legendary dissent in the ADM Jabalpur v. Shivkant Shukla case (1976), where he upheld the fundamental right to life and liberty even during the Emergency—a decision that later earned him posthumous accolades and moral victory.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna pursued law at Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi, and practiced in the Delhi High Court before being appointed as a judge in 2005. He served with distinction in the Delhi High Court for over a decade before being elevated to the Supreme Court of India in January 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS APPOINTMENT

1. Judicial Philosophy and Landmark Judgments

Justice Khanna is widely regarded as a constitutional purist whose judgments reflect a profound understanding of the spirit and structure of the Indian Constitution. His legal reasoning is often marked by clarity, empathy, and respect for democratic values.

- **Right to Privacy:** As a proponent of individual autonomy, Justice Khanna has emphasized the need to protect personal liberties against excessive state surveillance, reinforcing the idea that privacy is intrinsic to dignity and freedom.
- **Civil Liberties and Democratic Dissent:** He has underlined the importance of free speech and dissent in a democracy, stressing that the space for critique is vital for institutional growth and accountability.
- **Environmental Jurisprudence:** In an era of ecological stress, Justice Khanna has underscored the principle of intergenerational equity and the precautionary principle, advocating sustainable development while safeguarding environmental rights.

2. Vision for the Judiciary

Justice Khanna's approach to judicial leadership is people-centric and forward-looking:

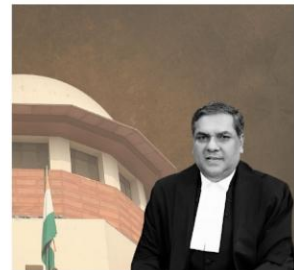
- **Access to Justice:** He emphasizes the removal of barriers—both procedural and economic—that hinder the common citizen's ability to approach courts, including legal aid, regional language usage, and digital outreach.
- **Judicial Reforms:** Advocating for digital courts, e-filing, and case management systems, Justice Khanna supports modernization to ensure a faster and more efficient justice delivery mechanism.
- **Human Rights and Constitutional Morality:** He upholds social justice as a cornerstone of constitutional morality, often referencing the transformative nature of the Constitution to support inclusive jurisprudence.

3. Administrative and Institutional Contributions

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Justice Khanna played a pivotal role in promoting virtual hearings, helping the judiciary transition to a more digital framework while maintaining transparency.

- He has worked to enhance judicial infrastructure across lower courts and supports the National Judicial Infrastructure Authority, aiming to create equitable and robust judicial ecosystems across India.

- His measured demeanor and non-adversarial style of leadership are seen as strengths, promoting collegiality among judges and fostering institutional harmony.



4. Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms Focus

- The Supreme Court launched a 'Digital Justice Kendra' for virtual legal aid in regional languages.

4. Challenges Ahead

Despite his credentials and vision, Justice Khanna's tenure comes with formidable challenges:

- **Judicial Backlog:** Over 4.5 crore cases are pending in Indian courts. A strategic combination of technology, alternate dispute resolution, and judicial manpower expansion is needed to address this crisis.
- **Judicial Accountability and Transparency:** Recent years have witnessed growing public scrutiny of judicial appointments, verdicts, and conduct. Ensuring transparency in Collegium recommendations and reasoned verdicts will be critical.
- **Centre-Judiciary Relations:** With frequent tensions between the executive and judiciary, the CJI must navigate these waters delicately, maintaining judicial independence while fostering dialogue and cooperation.

Editorial Section

INTRODUCTION

The appointment of Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the Chief Justice of India heralds a new chapter in the nation's constitutional journey. Though his tenure will span less than a year, its importance lies not in duration but in direction—as he is expected to reinforce the judiciary's moral compass and commitment to constitutionalism.

LEGACY AND LINEAGE

Justice Khanna's background is steeped in legal and moral authority. Justice H.R. Khanna, his uncle, is celebrated for choosing constitutional values over personal advancement when he delivered his lone dissent in the ADM Jabalpur case. That dissent, though overruled then, is now viewed as a high-water mark of judicial courage and ethics. This sense of constitutional duty, visible in Justice Sanjiv Khanna's jurisprudence, resonates through his judgments and judicial philosophy. He reflects a quiet yet unyielding belief in rule of law, individual dignity, and the structural balance of powers.

JUDICIAL VALUES AND LEADERSHIP

Known for his unassuming nature, Justice Khanna is a jurist of few but powerful words. His judgments are marked by lucidity, moderation, and principled reasoning. His leadership style is expected to be collaborative, emphasizing:

- Judicial discipline and integrity.
- Reasoned dialogue over confrontation.
- A vision rooted in transformative constitutionalism.

INSTITUTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The CJI wields not just judicial but institutional leadership. Justice Khanna's role in this capacity will be vital for:

- Streamlining case management and ensuring equitable bench composition.
- Promoting gender diversity and social representation within the higher judiciary.
- Enhancing collegium accountability while defending its independence.
- Deepening the use of technology to reduce delay and increase access.

CHALLENGES AND THE ROAD AHEAD

Justice Khanna inherits a judiciary that is both admired and critiqued. His brief term offers a window for significant interventions in areas such as:

- Flood of PILs: Reasserting the original purpose of PILs, and discouraging frivolous or politically motivated litigation.
- Judicial Infrastructure: Establishing long-term frameworks for court modernization through digital platforms and better funding.
- Executive-Judiciary Balance: Maintaining institutional dignity without undermining democratic processes, while firmly upholding the Constitution as the supreme law.

CONCLUSION

Justice Sanjiv Khanna's elevation as the 51st CJI comes at a time when India needs a judiciary that is not only efficient but morally grounded. His quiet resolve, legal acumen, and deep commitment to constitutional ideals suggest that his tenure, though short, will be substantive and impactful.

In a democracy as diverse and dynamic as India's, the judiciary serves not merely as an arbiter of disputes but as the guardian of constitutional conscience. Justice Khanna embodies that spirit. His legacy will likely be that of a jurist who, in the tradition of his legendary uncle, chose courage, clarity, and compassion over convenience. In doing so, he reaffirms the enduring truth that justice is not only done, but seen to be done—fairly, fearlessly, and faithfully.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL BRIEF

News Headlines

General Studies Paper-2

JUDICIARY IN - HOUSE INQUIRY

- **Supreme Court Initiates In-House Inquiry into Allegations Against Sitting High Court Judge**

Focus of the Month

INTRODUCTION

In a development that has reignited national conversations on judicial ethics and accountability, the Supreme Court of India has initiated an in-house inquiry against a sitting High Court judge following complaints of judicial misconduct. While the judiciary is a symbol of democratic checks and balances, instances of alleged impropriety within the system underline the need for stronger internal review mechanisms.

This in-house mechanism, operating in a quasi-formal domain, is designed to uphold the Restatement of Values of Judicial Life without compromising judicial independence. However, its largely confidential nature raises questions of transparency, accountability, and public trust in judicial institutions.

BACKGROUND OF THE IN-HOUSE INQUIRY PROCEDURE

The concept of an in-house inquiry in the Indian judiciary evolved after the K. Veeraswami case (1991), which clarified that judges of the higher judiciary could not be prosecuted without the sanction of the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

Subsequently, the Supreme Court framed an in-house procedure in 1997 to deal with allegations of misconduct. This procedure was not codified by law, but rather formulated as a set of internal ethical guidelines:

- Complaints must be made in writing with supporting documents.
- The CJI screens the complaint and, if deemed serious, constitutes a three-member committee of senior judges.
- If prima facie guilt is found, the judge may be asked to resign or take voluntary retirement. If the judge refuses, impeachment is considered as a last resort.
- Proceedings are confidential, and the findings are not necessarily made public.

Though the process aims to preserve judicial dignity, it remains beyond the reach of RTI and lacks a formal appeals mechanism for complainants.

WHY IT MATTERS: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY VS. TRANSPARENCY

The Indian judiciary is among the most powerful in the world, with sweeping powers of judicial review and constitutional interpretation. However, this power necessitates equally strong internal checks.

Public trust is the bedrock of judicial legitimacy. But opaque disciplinary mechanisms and the lack of a statutory framework for judicial inquiries contribute to perceptions of elitism and lack of accountability. As democratic institutions evolve, the judiciary too must adapt to growing demands for openness and answerability, without compromising independence.



Editorial Section

INTRODUCTION

The judiciary's in-house inquiry mechanism, often shrouded in secrecy, has once again come under public gaze. The issue is not just about the alleged misconduct of one individual but about the credibility and effectiveness of the judiciary's self-correcting systems. As public scrutiny intensifies, this moment offers an opportunity for deeper reflection and reform.

Judicial Independence and Self-Regulation

Article 50 of the Indian Constitution mandates the separation of the judiciary from the executive, ensuring its functional autonomy. However, with great power comes great responsibility. The judiciary's ability to self-regulate must be seen not just as an institutional right but as a moral and constitutional obligation. The in-house inquiry system, conceptualized as a shield from political interference, is now seen by many as a double-edged sword—protecting integrity on one hand, but appearing to lack accountability on the other. Unlike judges in some Western democracies, Indian judges do not face external disciplinary tribunals, making the efficacy of in-house mechanisms all the more vital.

THE PROBLEM OF OPAQUENESS

Critics of the in-house procedure point out several limitations:

- Absence of legislative backing: It operates on executive directions of the judiciary itself.
- Lack of procedural transparency: Complainants and the public are rarely informed of the outcomes.
- No formal opportunity for public scrutiny: This fuels a perception that the judiciary operates in an “ivory tower.”

Judicial ethics, while rooted in the Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997), need regular updating and legal reinforcement to remain effective in a changing society.

CASE STUDIES AND PAST PRECEDENTS

Justice Soumitra Sen (Calcutta HC):

1. Found guilty of misappropriation of funds. The Rajya Sabha passed an impeachment motion in 2011, but he resigned before the Lok Sabha could act.
2. Outcome: Resignation ended the process—no punitive consequence.

Justice P.D. Dinakaran (Sikkim HC):

1. Allegations of land grabbing and judicial misconduct. Faced impeachment proceedings but resigned midway.
2. Outcome: Avoided trial and retained post-retirement benefits.

Justice C.S. Karnan (Calcutta HC):

1. Accused multiple judges of corruption without evidence; sentenced to six months in jail for contempt by the Supreme Court.
2. Outcome: Highlighted the lack of mental health and fitness evaluations for judges.

These cases highlight how resignation becomes a soft exit, preventing thorough investigation and public accountability.

NEED FOR A ROBUST FRAMEWORK

The in-house inquiry mechanism must evolve into a statutorily supported, autonomous, and transparent system. This can be achieved through:

- Enactment of the Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (reintroduced in updated form).
- Establishment of a National Judicial Complaints Authority independent of the executive and judiciary.
- Time-bound disposal of complaints.
- Publication of redacted findings in serious cases to enhance public confidence.

Countries like the United Kingdom and Canada have independent Judicial Conduct Commissions, which publish reports, making their systems more transparent and citizen-friendly.

BALANCING TRANSPARENCY WITH JUDICIAL DIGNITY

While it is crucial to respect the sanctity and solemnity of the judicial office, the notion of judicial infallibility must give way to judicial accountability.

Transparency must be layered:

- Internal confidentiality during inquiry.
- Disclosure of outcome post-conclusion, especially if wrongdoing is established.
- Scope for review or appeal within the system.

Dignity is best protected when the public perceives fairness, not concealment.

CONCLUSION

India's judiciary stands at a critical juncture. The in-house inquiry system is a commendable start—but not an end. Without legislative muscle and procedural transparency, the system risks becoming ceremonial rather than corrective.

If the judiciary is to remain the people's last hope for justice, it must not only be independent—it must be seen as accountable, ethical, and reform-ready.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL BRIEF

News Headlines

General Studies Paper-3

DEFENCE EXPORT

- **Assad Regime Crumbles: Rebel Forces Capture Damascus, Bashar al-Assad Flees to Moscow as Transitional Government Takes Helm**

Focus of the Month

INTRODUCTION

The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, has reached a significant turning point with the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. On December 8, 2024, Assad fled to Moscow as rebel forces, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), captured key cities, including Damascus and Aleppo. This development has far-reaching implications for the country, the region, and the world.

BACKGROUND

The Assad regime's collapse is attributed to various factors, including:

- **Weakened Support:** Russia's engagement in Ukraine and Iran's conflict with Israel limited their support for Assad's regime.
 - **Internal Divisions:** The Syrian forces were weakened by internal divisions and infighting.
 - **Economic Conditions:** Severe economic conditions, with approximately 90% of the population living below the poverty line, contributed to the erosion of government support. Current News Development
- The fall of the Assad regime has led to a power vacuum, with various groups vying for control. The key developments include:
- **Rebel Offensive:** The HTS-led rebellion launched a surprise offensive in Idlib, capturing Aleppo within 48 hours and then marching towards Damascus.
 - **New Government:** A transitional government has been formed, with Ahmed al-Sharaa as president, and plans are underway to issue a constitutional declaration.
 - **Israeli Invasion:** Israel Defence Forces initiated military operations in Syria's Quneitra Governorate, targeting areas in the buffer zone between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and the rest of Syria.

KEY PLAYERS INVOLVED

The fall of the Assad regime involves various key players, including:

- **Bashar al-Assad:** The president of Syria since 2000, known for his autocratic rule and human rights abuses.
- **Abu Mohammad al-Jolani:** The leader of HTS, a former al-Qaeda operative who has distanced himself from global jihadist agendas.
- **Ahmed al-Sharaa:** The president of the transitional government, who has announced plans to issue a constitutional declaration.

Aftermath and Future Prospects

The fall of the Assad regime has significant implications for the future of Syria, including:

- **Transitional Government :** The new government faces challenges in establishing stability and security in the country.
- **Reconstruction Efforts:** The international community will need to provide humanitarian aid and support for reconstruction efforts.
- **Regional Implications :** The fall of the Assad regime may lead to a shift in alliances and potentially impact defence exports to Syria. Defence Export Implications The fall of the Assad regime may lead to a shift in defence export relationships in the region, with potential implications for countries like:
- **Russia:** A key supporter of the Assad regime, Russia may see its influence in the region impacted by the regime's fall.
- **Iran:** Another significant supporter of the Assad regime, Iran's role in the region may be reevaluated in light of the regime change.
- **United States:** The US may see opportunities to increase its defence exports to Syria, particularly if the new government seeks to diversify its military relationships.



CONCLUSION

The fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria marks a significant turning point in the country's history. The transitional government faces challenges in establishing stability and security, and the international community will need to provide humanitarian aid and support for reconstruction efforts. The implications of this development will be far-reaching, with potential impacts on defence exports, regional security, and global politics. As the situation continues to unfold, it is essential to monitor developments closely and assess the potential consequences for the region and the world.

Editorial Section

A SIGNIFICANT TURNING POINT

The fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria marks a significant turning point in the country's history. After years of brutal civil war, the Assad regime's collapse raises hopes for a new era of stability, security, and prosperity for the Syrian people. This development has far-reaching implications for the country, the region, and the world.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The transitional government faces significant challenges in establishing stability and security, and the international community will need to provide humanitarian aid and support for reconstruction efforts. However, this also presents an opportunity for Syria to rebuild and emerge from the ashes of war. The new government must prioritize the needs and aspirations of the Syrian people, ensuring that their rights and dignity are respected.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

The fall of the Assad regime has significant implications for the region and the world. The shift in alliances and potential impact on defence exports will be closely watched by regional and global powers. The international community must work together to support Syria's reconstruction and ensure that the country's future is shaped by the needs and aspirations of its people, rather than external interests.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Stability and Security:** The transitional government must prioritize stability and security to create a conducive environment for reconstruction and development.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** The international community must provide humanitarian aid to support the Syrian people and alleviate their suffering.
- **Reconstruction Efforts:** The new government must work with the international community to develop a comprehensive plan for reconstruction and development.
- **Regional Dynamics:** The fall of the Assad regime may lead to a shift in regional alliances and dynamics, which could have significant implications for the Middle East.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR SYRIA

The fall of the Assad regime is a testament to the power of the Syrian people's resilience and determination. As the country looks to the future, it is crucial to learn from the past and work towards a brighter, more prosperous future for all Syrians. With the right support and guidance, Syria can emerge from the ashes of war and build a more stable, secure, and prosperous future for generations to come.



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SESSION 2024 - 2025



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**DO CHECK OUT OUR FIRST
OCTOBER ISSUE!!**

As we conclude yet another edition of Dhairya Times, I extend my sincere appreciation to Editorial Board Members of Dhairya - The Civil Services Society for committing to provide this horizon to Aspirants in and across. Their anticipated attribution to this publication is an enhanced learning effort and sign of true team work.

To all the Aspirants and our devoted readers, we hope this is serving as the right resource material for you and that this is yielding the right output. We are obliged by your response by far and continue to yield the best in our capability to Dhairya Times - A Quest For Horizon.

With every edition, we are Inculcating more clarity and novel information for our readers and trying our best to provide the handbook one could require.

Let's continue to strive and immerse ourselves in Reading , perceiving and standing up tall with all the awareness we must. This community seeks our dedication to publish and yours to read and we shall take that down to the coming year as well.

Best regards,

**Vimlok Tiwari
Convenor, Dhairya: The Civil Service Society**

