



ISSUE 5, FEBRUARY

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!

IPS Preeti Kumari



In J. R. R. Tolkien'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**

STRENGTH
SUNDAY

FEAR



Monthly News Highlight

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

February 1, 2025

Economic Survey 2024-25 Projects 6.5% GDP Growth

The Economic Survey forecasts India's GDP growth at 6.5% for FY25, reflecting stable economic recovery and growth prospects.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Inflation Trends: Retail at 4.9%, Food Inflation Rises to 8.4%

Retail inflation stands at 4.9%, with food prices rising sharply to 8.4%, raising concerns about cost-of-living pressures.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Unemployment Rate Falls to 3.2% in 2023-24

The unemployment rate dropped to a low of 3.2%, signaling improved job opportunities and economic stability.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Agriculture Sector Anticipates 3.8% Growth in FY25

The agriculture sector is projected to grow by 3.8%, reflecting improved productivity and favorable conditions.

GS Paper 3: Agriculture

Government Cautions Against Excessive Financialisation

Authorities warned against over-reliance on financial instruments, stressing balanced economic growth.

GS Paper 3: Economy

February 2, 2025

Forex Reserves Reach \$634.6 Billion in January 2025

India's foreign exchange reserves increased to \$634.6 billion, strengthening the country's financial stability.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Gross NPAs Decline to 12-Year Low of 2.6%

Non-performing assets in banks dropped to their lowest in 12 years, reflecting improved asset quality.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Railway Network Expands by 2,031 km

The Indian Railways expanded its network by 2,031 km, improving connectivity across the country.

GS Paper 3: Infrastructure

Status of Devolution to Panchayats Report Released

A report highlighted progress in empowering local governance through financial and administrative devolution.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

**February 01
Indian
coast guard
day**

**February 02
World
Wetlands day**

Monthly News Highlight

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

India Ranks 96th in Corruption Perceptions Index 2024

India ranked 96th in the global corruption index, showing moderate progress in anti-corruption efforts.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

February 3, 2025

Vice President Dhankhar Takes Holy Dip at Maha Kumbh 2025

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar participated in the Maha Kumbh, emphasizing cultural and religious traditions.

GS Paper 1: Art and Culture

UPSC Releases Notification for Civil Services Examination 2025

The UPSC announced details for the upcoming civil services exam, inviting applications for various posts.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

India's Services Sector Sees 7.2% Growth in Q3 FY25

The services sector recorded a strong 7.2% growth, contributing significantly to GDP.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Government Launches National Clean Air Programme 2.0

The government launched NCAP 2.0, introducing stricter measures to curb air pollution.

GS Paper 3: Environment

India and Japan Conduct Joint Naval Exercise in Indian Ocean

India and Japan conducted a joint exercise to strengthen maritime security and strategic ties.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

February 4, 2025

Bhutan King Visits Maha Kumbh

Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar visited the Maha Kumbh, reinforcing cultural ties between the two nations.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

Cabinet Approves New National Education Policy Amendments

The Cabinet approved changes in the education policy to enhance learning outcomes and skill development.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

**February 04
World Cancer
day**

ACHIEVEMENT

The year 2025 has been designated as the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. The opening ceremony took place in Paris, France, on February 4-5, marking the commencement of a year-long celebration aimed at promoting advancements and collaborations in quantum science globally..

Monthly News Highlight

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

India's Merchandise Exports Rise by 12% in January 2025

Merchandise exports saw a 12% growth, boosting India's trade performance.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Supreme Court Upholds Constitutional Validity of Farm Laws

The Supreme Court upheld the legality of the controversial farm laws, settling a long-standing debate.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

ISRO Successfully Launches GSAT-31 Communication Satellite

ISRO launched GSAT-31, enhancing India's telecommunication and broadcasting capabilities.

GS Paper 3: Science and Technology

**February 06
international
day of zero
tolerance for
female
genital
mutilation**

February 5, 2025

Prime Minister Modi Participates in Maha Kumbh Mela

PM Modi took part in the Maha Kumbh, promoting India's rich spiritual heritage.

GS Paper 1: Art and Culture

Delhi Assembly Elections: BJP Secures Two-Thirds Majority

The BJP achieved a strong victory in the Delhi elections, gaining a significant majority.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

Finance Ministry Announces Measures to Boost MSME Sector

The government introduced policies to support small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting growth.

GS Paper 3: Economy

India and UK Sign Free Trade Agreement

India and the UK finalized a Free Trade Agreement to boost economic cooperation.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

NITI Aayog Releases Report on Digital Economy Growth

NITI Aayog's report highlighted India's rapid digital transformation and its economic impact.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 6, 2025

Government Launches National Water Conservation Mission

A new mission was launched to address water scarcity and promote sustainable management.

GS Paper 3: Environment

India's Industrial Production Grows by 5.8% in December 2024

Industrial output increased by 5.8%, reflecting robust manufacturing growth.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Supreme Court Issues Guidelines on Data Privacy Protection

The Supreme Court introduced guidelines to ensure citizens' data privacy and security.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

India and Russia Conduct Joint Military Exercise 'Indra 2025'

India and Russia held a joint military exercise to enhance defense cooperation.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

Government Approves New National Health Policy

The Cabinet approved a new health policy, focusing on affordable and accessible healthcare.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

February 7, 2025

Parliament Passes Bill on Cryptocurrency Regulation

A new bill was passed to regulate cryptocurrency trade and ensure financial security.

GS Paper 3: Economy

India's FDI Inflows Reach \$75 Billion in 2024

India's FDI inflows reached \$75 billion, reflecting strong investor confidence.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Supreme Court Recognizes Digital Media as Part of Freedom of Press

The Supreme Court ruled that digital media platforms are protected under press freedom rights.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

Government Launches National Renewable Energy Mission

The government introduced a mission to expand renewable energy capacity across the nation.

GS Paper 3: Environment

India and France Strengthen Defense Cooperation

India and France agreed to enhance defense ties through joint initiatives and technology sharing.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

February 06

International day of zero tolerance for female genital mutilation

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 8, 2025

Government Introduces National Urban Mobility Policy

The new policy aims to improve public transport and promote eco-friendly urban mobility solutions.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

India's Agriculture Exports Grow by 15% in FY25

Agricultural exports grew by 15%, boosting India's trade surplus in the sector.

GS Paper 3: Agriculture

Supreme Court Directs States to Implement Police Reforms

The Supreme Court ordered states to enforce long-pending police reforms for better law enforcement.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

India and Australia Sign Agreement on Cybersecurity Cooperation

India and Australia signed a pact to strengthen cyber security collaboration.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

Government Launches National Skill Development Programme

A new programme was introduced to provide vocational training and improve workforce skills.

GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance

February 9, 2025

31 Maoists and 2 Security Personnel Killed in Chhattisgarh Encounter

Security forces clashed with Maoists in Chhattisgarh, resulting in 31 insurgents and 2 personnel losing their lives.

GS Paper 3: Internal Security

Punjab Government Launches WhatsApp Helpline for NRI Grievances

The Punjab government introduced a WhatsApp helpline to address concerns and complaints from Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

GS Paper 2: Governance

N. Biren Singh Resigns as Manipur Chief Minister Amid Ethnic Violence

Manipur CM N. Biren Singh resigned following intensified ethnic violence in the state.

GS Paper 2: Polity

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 10
World pulses day and National deworming day

February 11
International Day of women and girls in science

Paytm CEO Suggests Waterfront Park and Observation Wheel on Yamuna to PM Modi

Paytm's CEO proposed developing a waterfront park and an observation wheel along the Yamuna River to boost tourism.

GS Paper 3: Infrastructure

Bus Carrying Pilgrims Falls into Gorge in Gujarat; 5 Dead, 35 Injured
A tragic accident in Gujarat claimed five lives and left 35 injured when a bus carrying pilgrims veered into a gorge.

GS Paper 1: Geography

February 10, 2025

RBI Doubles Bond Purchases to Manage Liquidity Deficit

The Reserve Bank of India increased bond purchases to address a liquidity shortfall in the financial system.

GS Paper 3: Economy

BJP Wins Two-Thirds Majority in Delhi Legislative Assembly Election

The BJP secured a decisive victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, gaining a two-thirds majority.

GS Paper 2: Polity

India's Forex Reserves Fall by \$2.54 Billion, Ending Three-Week Gain
Forex reserves decreased by \$2.54 billion, reversing recent gains and signaling economic adjustments.

GS Paper 3: Economy

India Considers Raising Bank Deposit Insurance Limit

The government is reviewing proposals to increase the deposit insurance limit for enhanced banking security.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Harleys, Bourbon, and Modi's Offerings to Trump Discussed

Discussions on India-US trade relations included cultural exchanges and diplomatic gestures between the two leaders.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

February 11, 2025

Kottayam Nursing College Ragging Incident: Student Brutally Assaulted

A disturbing ragging incident in Kottayam Nursing College resulted in a student being severely injured.

GS Paper 2: Social Justice

ACHIEVEMENT

The European Union and India evaluated their Science and Technology Agreement, set for renewal for 2025–2030. The collaboration has evolved through programs like Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, with Indian participation in 88 projects, showcasing the strengthening of international scientific partnerships.

Monthly News Highlight

January 16
National
Startup day

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

RBI's Increased Bond Purchases Aim to Address Liquidity Shortfall
The RBI's decision to expand bond purchases aims to manage cash flow challenges in the banking sector.

GS Paper 3: Economy

India's Forex Reserves Decline Amidst Economic Measures

The decline in forex reserves reflects ongoing financial adjustments in response to market conditions.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Government Considers Enhancing Bank Deposit Insurance Coverage

Authorities are evaluating an increase in deposit insurance to improve financial stability.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Trade Discussions Highlight Tariff Adjustments and Economic Relations

Talks between trade partners emphasized revising tariffs to strengthen economic cooperation.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

February 12, 2025

Delhi Legislative Assembly Election Results: BJP Secures Majority

The BJP emerged victorious in the Delhi elections, consolidating its political dominance in the capital.

GS Paper 2: Polity

Economic Implications of RBI's Bond Purchase Strategy

Analysts examined how the RBI's bond strategy could stabilize liquidity and support economic growth.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Analysis: Decline in India's Forex Reserves and Its Impact

The recent drop in forex reserves raised concerns about trade deficits and global financial pressures.

GS Paper 3: Economy

Policy Review: Potential Increase in Bank Deposit Insurance Limits

Authorities are exploring ways to protect depositors by raising insurance coverage on bank savings.

GS Paper 3: Economy

International Trade: India's Negotiations on Tariffs and Imports

India engaged in trade discussions to refine tariff policies and strengthen global trade relations.

GS Paper 2: International Relations

ACHIEVEMENT

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) collaborated with the Indian Institute of Technology Madras to develop the Indigenous RISC-V Controller for Space Applications (IRIS), based on the SHAKTI processor. Built on the RISC-V architecture, IRIS is suitable for a wide range of applications, from the Internet of Things (IoT) to strategic computing systems. This collaboration showcases India's advancements in semiconductor technology, as the chip was fully designed, fabricated, and tested domestically, highlighting the nation's growing capabilities in space and electronics.

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 13
World radio
Day

February 13, 2025

President's Rule Imposed in Manipur Amid Ongoing Ethnic Violence
Amid rising violence, the central government imposed President's Rule in Manipur to restore order.

GS Paper 2: Polity

Union Government Enforces Direct Rule in Violence-Affected Manipur
The Centre assumed direct control of Manipur's administration following the worsening unrest.

GS Paper 2: Polity

Central Authorities Intervene in Manipur's Governance Due to Unrest
The central government stepped in to manage law and order in Manipur amid escalating violence.

GS Paper 2: Polity

Federal Administration Assumes Control in Manipur Amid Turmoil
Federal authorities took charge in Manipur to stabilize the volatile situation.

GS Paper 2: Polity

Government Steps In: President's Rule Declared in Manipur
The imposition of President's Rule highlights the severity of the ongoing crisis in Manipur.

GS Paper 2: Polity

ACHIEVEMENT

The first Raisina Middle East Conference was held in Abu Dhabi, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar as the Chief Guest. Organized in partnership with the UAE, it focused on strengthening geopolitical, economic, and strategic ties. This event highlights India's growing influence in global diplomacy.

February 14, 2025

Police Seize 668 Books Linked to Banned Islamic Organization in Jammu and Kashmir

Security forces seized 668 books allegedly linked to a banned Islamic organization in J&K.

GS Paper 3: Internal Security

Authorities Confiscate Literature Associated with Outlawed Group in Kashmir
Law enforcement confiscated prohibited material during a targeted operation in Kashmir.

GS Paper 3: Internal Security

Security Forces Conduct Raids, Seize Prohibited Publications in J&K
Security agencies carried out coordinated raids in J&K, seizing banned literature.

GS Paper 3: Internal Security

Monthly News Highlight

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

Law Enforcement Targets Banned Organization's Materials in Kashmir
Police intensified efforts to curb the spread of extremist content in the region.

GS Paper 3: Internal Security

Crackdown in Jammu and Kashmir: Hundreds of Books Seized in Raids
As part of anti-terror operations, security forces seized hundreds of suspect publications.

GS Paper 3: Internal Security

February 15, 2025

"Health Ministry Allocates ₹531 Crore for AI in Healthcare and Cancer Research"

- The Ministry of Health announced a ₹531 crore investment to integrate Artificial Intelligence into healthcare services and advance cancer research, aiming to enhance diagnostic accuracy and treatment outcomes.

GS Paper 2 – Health

"Anti-Defection Bill Clarified by Law Ministry"

- The Law Ministry clarified that the recently passed anti-defection bill does not require ratification by state legislatures, streamlining its implementation process.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

"Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 Celebrates Cultural Ties"

- The Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 event commenced in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, celebrating the cultural ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, emphasizing unity and the integration of traditional Indian knowledge with modern education as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

GS Paper 1 – Art & Culture

ACHIEVEMENT

A World Bank report released on February 28 emphasized that India needs to sustain an average growth rate of 7.8% over the next 22 years to achieve its goal of reaching high-income status by 2047. The report underscores the necessity for accelerated reforms to maintain this growth trajectory.

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 16, 2025

"Stampede at New Delhi Railway Station Claims 18 Lives"

- A tragic stampede at New Delhi Railway Station resulted in 18 fatalities. Authorities have increased security measures and initiated a high-level investigation to determine the cause and prevent future incidents.

GS Paper 1 – Society

"India and U.S. to Negotiate Trade Agreement by Autumn 2025"

- India and the U.S. have agreed to negotiate the first part of a trade agreement by autumn 2025. India aims to increase energy purchases from the U.S. to address concerns about the trade deficit.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"Services Team Dominates 38th National Games in Uttarakhand"

- The Services team secured the highest number of medals at the 38th National Games, with a total of 121 medals, including 68 golds, showcasing their athletic excellence.

GS Paper 2 – Sports

February 17, 2025

"Fire Breaks Out at Maha Kumbh Sectors 18 and 19"

- A fire incident occurred at Sectors 18 and 19 of the Maha Kumbh Mela, leading to property damage. Emergency services responded promptly, and an investigation is underway to determine the cause.

GS Paper 1 – Society

"World Bank Urges India to Cut Tariffs and Initiate Reforms"

- The World Bank has urged India to reduce import tariffs and implement regulatory reforms to enhance foreign investment, stating that high tariffs on intermediate and capital goods increase trade costs and reduce openness to imports and exports.

GS Paper 3 – Economy

ACHIEVEMENT

On February 28, India celebrated National Science Day, highlighting advancements in AI, quantum computing, geospatial tech, and climate research for a Viksit Bharat.

Monthly News Highlight

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

"India Approves National Critical Minerals Mission"

- In January 2025, India approved the National Critical Minerals Mission with a budgetary outlay of ₹16,300 crore over seven years, aiming to explore and recycle critical minerals essential for various industries.

GS Paper 3 – Economy

February 18, 2025

"Delhi High Court Directs Railways to Prevent Future Stampedes"

- In response to the recent stampede, the Delhi High Court ordered Indian Railways to implement effective crowd management strategies and ensure passenger safety to prevent such tragedies in the future.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"India-UK Free Trade Agreement Finalized"

- The historic trade pact aims to enhance bilateral trade in goods and services, with a focus on technology transfer, marking a significant milestone in India-UK relations.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

"India and U.S. Set Target to Double Bilateral Trade by 2030"

- Under 'Mission 500', India and the U.S. have set a target to more than double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030, focusing on trade, defense, energy cooperation, and strategic partnerships.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

February 19, 2025

ACHIEVEMENT

On February 28, India celebrated National Science Day, highlighting advancements in AI, quantum computing, geospatial tech, and climate research for a Viksit Bharat.

"Samkelo Depended on USAID-Backed Drugs to Stay Alive. Then Came Trump's Order"

- Samkelo, a young man living with HIV in South Africa, relied on USAID-provided antiretrovirals (ARVs). After President Trump's executive order on January 20, 2025, halting all US foreign aid for 90 days, many global aid programs, including USAID, which funds PEPFAR, were stopped.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Monthly News Highlight

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

"India's First Space-Based Solar Observatory Completes One Year"

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology

- The Aditya-L1 mission achieves major milestones in studying solar storms and their impact on Earth, marking a successful year in space research.

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology

"Government to Introduce Critical Cybersecurity Bill"

- The proposed bill aims to enhance India's cyber defense capabilities amidst rising threats, focusing on protecting critical infrastructure and data.

GS Paper 3 – Cybersecurity

February 20, 2025

"Rekha Gupta Sworn in as Delhi's New Chief Minister"

- Rekha Gupta took oath as Delhi's Chief Minister, pledging to elevate the city to "new heights" and focusing on governance reforms.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

"Delhi High Court Questions Railways on Overbooking After Stampede"

- In the aftermath of the New Delhi Railway Station stampede, the Delhi High Court questioned the Railways on the practice of selling excess tickets, seeking measures to prevent such incidents.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"President Trump Reiterates Call for Reciprocal Tariffs Amid Trade Talks"

- During ongoing trade discussions, U.S. President Donald Trump emphasized the need for reciprocal tariffs, impacting India's trade negotiations.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

February 20
World Day of
social justice

ACHIEVEMENT

On February 28, India celebrated National Science Day, highlighting advancements in AI, quantum computing, geospatial tech, and climate research for a Viksit Bharat.

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 21, 2025

"Supreme Court Addresses Increase in Ragging Complaints"

- The Supreme Court expressed concern over the spike in ragging incidents across educational institutions, highlighting the need for stricter enforcement of anti-ragging measures.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"Lokayukta Police to Close Probe Against Siddaramaiah in MUDA Case"

- The Lokayukta police decided to close the investigation against former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case, citing lack of evidence.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

"Bar Council of India Opposes Draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill"

- The Bar Council of India raised objections to the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025, stating it could undermine the autonomy of legal professionals.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

February 22, 2025

"Centre Withdraws Draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill After Protests"

- Following protests and objections from the Bar Council of India and legal professionals, the Union Law and Justice Ministry withdrew the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025, for further consultation.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

"Delhi High Court Seeks Railways' Plan to Prevent Future Stampedes"

- The Delhi High Court directed Indian Railways to submit a comprehensive plan detailing measures to prevent incidents like the recent stampede at New Delhi Railway Station.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

**February 21,
International
mother
language Day**

ACHIEVEMENT

On February 28, India celebrated National Science Day, highlighting advancements in AI, quantum computing, geospatial tech, and climate research for a Viksit Bharat.

Monthly News Highlight

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

"India-U.S. Trade Talks Progress Amid Reciprocal Tariff Discussions"

- Trade negotiations between India and the U.S. advanced, with both nations addressing concerns over reciprocal tariffs and seeking mutually beneficial agreements.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

February 23, 2025

"Supreme Court Issues Guidelines to Curb Ragging in Educational Institutions"

- In response to increasing ragging incidents, the Supreme Court issued comprehensive guidelines aimed at stricter enforcement of anti-ragging measures in educational institutions.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"Centre to Redraft Advocates (Amendment) Bill After Legal Fraternity's Feedback"

- The Union Law and Justice Ministry announced plans to redraft the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, incorporating feedback from the legal community to address concerns over professional autonomy.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

"Delhi Government Initiates Measures to Improve Crowd Management at Railway Stations"

- In light of the recent stampede, the Delhi government, in collaboration with Indian Railways, initiated measures to enhance crowd management and passenger safety at major railway stations.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

February 24, 2025

"India and U.S. Finalize Initial Framework for Trade Agreement"

- India and the United States finalized the initial framework for a trade agreement, focusing on reducing tariffs and enhancing bilateral economic cooperation.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

ACHIEVEMENT

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Monthly News Highlight

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

"Delhi High Court Directs Implementation of Anti-Ragging Measures"

- The Delhi High Court directed educational institutions to implement stringent anti-ragging measures, emphasizing the need for a safe learning environment.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"Bar Council of India Welcomes Centre's Decision to Redraft Advocates Bill"

- The Bar Council of India welcomed the government's decision to withdraw and redraft the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, expressing hope for inclusive consultations.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

February 25, 2025

"Parliamentary Panel on 'One Nation, One Election' to Convene"

- The parliamentary committee examining the bills for simultaneous elections, known as 'One Nation, One Election,' is scheduled to meet on February 25. The panel will hear from legal experts, including former Chief Justice of India U.U. Lalit, to discuss the feasibility and implications of conducting concurrent elections across the country.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

ACHIEVEMENT

On February 28, India celebrated National Science Day, highlighting advancements in AI, quantum computing, geospatial tech, and climate research for a Viksit Bharat.

"Thiruvananthapuram Mass Murder: Accused Arrested"

- In a tragic incident, a 23-year-old man in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, was arrested for allegedly murdering five family members, including his younger brother and grandmother. The motive is believed to be related to financial disputes.

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

"Delhi High Court Seeks Railways' Plan to Prevent Future Stampedes"

- The Delhi High Court directed Indian Railways to submit a comprehensive plan detailing measures to prevent incidents like the recent stampede at New Delhi Railway Station.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

Monthly News Highlight

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

February 26, 2025

**February 27,
World NGO
Day**

"Militant Attack on Army Convoy in Rajouri District"

- An army truck was attacked by militants in Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir. No casualties were reported, but the incident underscores ongoing security challenges in the region.

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

"Supreme Court Seeks Status Report on Anti-Ragging Measures Implementation"

- The Supreme Court requested a status report from educational institutions regarding the implementation of anti-ragging measures, emphasizing the need for a safe learning environment.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

"India-U.S. Trade Agreement Nears Completion Amid Reciprocal Tariff Discussions"

- Negotiations between India and the U.S. on a trade agreement approached final stages, with both countries addressing issues related to reciprocal tariffs and market access.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

ACHIEVEMENT

On February 28, India celebrated National Science Day, highlighting advancements in AI, quantum computing, geospatial tech, and climate research for a Viksit Bharat.

February 27, 2025

"Kerala Police Record Arrest in Thiruvananthapuram Mass Murder Case"

- The Kerala Police officially recorded the arrest of the accused in the Thiruvananthapuram mass murder case after questioning him at the hospital. The investigation is ongoing to uncover further details about the motive and circumstances.

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

"Bar Council of India Welcomes Centre's Decision to Redraft Advocates Bill"

- The Bar Council of India welcomed the government's decision to withdraw and redraft the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, expressing hope for inclusive consultations.

GS Paper 2 – Polity

Monthly News Highlight

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

**February 28,
National
Science Day**

"India-UK Free Trade Agreement Finalized"

- The historic trade pact aims to enhance bilateral trade in goods and services, with a focus on technology transfer.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

February 28, 2025

"Supreme Court Seeks Status Report on Anti-Ragging Measures Implementation"

- The Supreme Court requested a status report from educational institutions regarding the implementation of anti-ragging measures, emphasizing the need for a safe learning environment.

GS Paper 2 – Governance

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DEBURY

NON-HOSTS

WEEK-END

INDIA NUCLEAR POLICY



INTRODUCTION

1. Definition of Nuclear Policy:

A nuclear policy refers to a set of principles, guidelines, and strategies that guide a country's nuclear program, including its nuclear weapons, nuclear energy, and nuclear safety.

2. Importance of Nuclear Policy:

Nuclear policy plays a crucial role in international relations, affecting global security, non-proliferation efforts, and diplomatic relations between nations.

3. Brief Overview of India's Nuclear Policy:

India's nuclear policy focuses on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

II. Key Features of India's Nuclear Policy

1. No First Use (NFU):

India has committed to a "No First Use" policy, which means it will not use nuclear weapons unless first attacked by an adversary using nuclear weapons.

2. Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD):

India maintains that it will build and maintain a nuclear arsenal sufficient to deter adversaries, but will avoid pursuing excessive numbers of weapons.

3. Nuclear Retaliation :

In case of a nuclear attack, India has a policy of nuclear retaliation, ensuring that any such attack would invite a devastating response.

4. Civilian Nuclear Program:

India's policy also promotes the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, including energy production, while asserting its right to nuclear development.

III. Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy

1. Pre-1974 :

India's policy was focused on disarmament and peaceful nuclear technology. The country was a strong advocate for global nuclear disarmament and was one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

2. 1974 - Pokhran I :

India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, marking the shift from purely civilian use of nuclear technology to military capabilities.

INDIA NUCLEAR POLICY

3. 1998 - Pokhran II :

India conducted a series of nuclear tests, explicitly declaring itself a nuclear weapons state. This led to the development of India's current nuclear policy of deterrence and self-reliance.

4. Post-1998:

India's policy has largely focused on maintaining nuclear deterrence against Pakistan and China, while emphasizing global nuclear non-proliferation.

IV. India's Nuclear Doctrine (2003)

India's Nuclear Doctrine, as articulated in 2003, lays out the country's stance on the use of nuclear weapons. Key components include:

1. No First Use (NFU):

India will not use nuclear weapons first in any conflict but reserves the right to retaliate in case of a nuclear attack.

2. Nuclear Retaliation:

Any use of nuclear weapons against India will be met with a strong retaliatory strike.

3. Credible Minimum Deterrence:

India seeks to maintain a nuclear arsenal that is sufficient to deter adversaries without engaging in an arms race.

4. Nuclear Command Authority (NCA):

This is a structure designed to control India's nuclear weapons, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Committee on Security, and the Strategic Forces Command.

V. International Dimensions of India's Nuclear Policy

India's nuclear policy has significant international implications. Despite not being a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), India has pursued a policy of responsible nuclear deterrence. The country has sought to engage in various international frameworks, including:

1. The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG):

India has sought membership in this group of countries controlling nuclear technology transfers, leveraging its commitment to non-proliferation and safeguards.

2. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT):

India has not signed the CTBT, citing the need for a non-discriminatory global arms control regime.

3. India-US Civil Nuclear Deal (2005):

This deal marked a significant shift in India's nuclear diplomacy, leading to the recognition of India as a de facto nuclear weapons state and enabling cooperation on civilian nuclear energy.

VI. Nuclear Arsenal and Delivery Mechanisms

India's nuclear arsenal is relatively modest in terms of numbers, but it is considered credible for deterrence purposes. It consists of:

1. Land-Based Missiles:

India has developed a range of ballistic missiles, including the Prithvi, Agni, and K-15, capable of delivering nuclear payloads.

2. Sea-Based Deterrent:

India has launched the INS Arihant, a nuclear-powered submarine with ballistic

INDIA NUCLEAR POLICY

missiles, which provides a second-strike capability and enhances deterrence.

3. **Air-Based Delivery:**

India has the capability to deliver nuclear weapons via bombers, including aircraft like the Mirage-2000 and Su-30MKI.

India's nuclear arsenal is centered on maintaining a second-strike capability, ensuring that a nuclear attack on India would result in devastating retaliation.

VII. India's Nuclear Security and Safety Measures

India has implemented robust nuclear security and safety measures, including:

1. **Nuclear Command Authority (NCA):**

The NCA ensures the command and control of India's nuclear forces is centralized and secure.

2. **Nuclear Security Architecture:**

India has put in place extensive security systems around its nuclear facilities, including physical protection, intelligence gathering, and access control.

3. **International Cooperation:**

India collaborates with international agencies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to safeguard nuclear materials and prevent nuclear terrorism.

VIII. Regional and Global Implications

1. **Regional Security Dynamics :**

Pakistan and China's Nuclear Capabilities and Implications: India's nuclear policy is influenced by regional security dynamics, including the presence of nuclear-armed states such as Pakistan and China.

2. **Global Non-Proliferation Efforts :**

India's Role and Stance : India has been actively engaged in global non-proliferation efforts, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

3. **Nuclear Terrorism and Proliferation :**

Threats and India's Response: India has been concerned about the threat of nuclear terrorism and proliferation, and has taken steps to strengthen its nuclear security and safety measures.

IX . Challenges and Concerns

1. **Arms Race with Pakistan and China:**

The presence of nuclear weapons in neighboring countries has led to concerns about an arms race, particularly with Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and China's growing capabilities.

2. **Strategic Stability:**

Maintaining strategic stability while modernizing nuclear arsenals poses a significant challenge. Miscalculations or accidents could escalate tension.

3. **Global Non-Proliferation Regime:**

India's refusal to sign the NPT and its nuclear tests have complicated international non-proliferation efforts.

4. **Technology and Safety :**

India faces challenges in ensuring the safety and security of its nuclear technology, given the evolving nature of threats such as cyber-attacks or terrorism.

X . Way Forward

1. **Engagement in Global Arms Control:** India can play a larger role in global disarmament efforts, advocating for nuclear disarmament while maintaining its strategic deterrence capabilities.

INDIA NUCLEAR POLICY

2. Confidence-Building Measures:

India should engage in confidence-building measures with Pakistan and China to reduce the risks of a nuclear conflict. Transparency in nuclear doctrines and risk-reduction strategies could help stabilize the region.

3. Enhanced Security Frameworks :

Continued modernization of its nuclear security infrastructure, including enhanced command-and-control systems, would further mitigate risks.

XI . Conclusion

India's nuclear policy has been shaped by the need to secure its borders and deter potential adversaries, especially in the volatile South Asian region. With its no-first-use stance and commitment to minimum deterrence, India aims to ensure that its nuclear arsenal remains a stabilizing force in global geopolitics. However, as regional security dynamics evolve, particularly with nuclear rivals like China and Pakistan, India's nuclear posture will continue to adapt to the changing strategic environment.

India's policy reflects a balance between national security concerns and global non-proliferation aspirations, making it an important player in the international nuclear debate

INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

Write up

INTRODUCTION

Nuclear policy refers to a set of guidelines, principles, and strategies a country follows regarding its nuclear weapons and nuclear energy programs.

INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

India's nuclear policy is primarily based on three principles:

- No first use: States that it will only use nuclear weapons in retaliation to anuclear attack.
- Credible minimum deterrence: India aims to maintain a small but sufficient nuclear arsenal to deter potential aggressors.
- Non-proliferation: Supporting global disarmament while maintaining strict control over nuclear materials and technology.

EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY:

1. After independence, India focused on peaceful nuclear energy under the leadership of Homi J. Bhabha.
2. In 1974 India conducted its first nuclear test called "smiling buddha" and the nuclear suppliers group was formed.
3. In 1988, India conducted five more nuclear test under "operation shakti" officially becoming a nuclear weapon state.
4. In 1999, India proposed a draft nuclear policy based on the no first use principle.
5. In 2003, India officially adopted its nuclear doctrine confirming the NFU policy which remains India's official policy at present day also.

INDIA AS A NUCLEAR STATE IN GLOBAL SOUTH:

India's role as a nuclear state have a great impact on South Asia. It has influenced security, politics and international relations among different countries in the following ways.

- It's nuclear power enhance its position as a leader among the developing nations of South Asia.

- After becoming a nuclear power, India maintained its independent foreign policy, proving that NAM country achieve nuclear success.
- Has inspired other developing countries to pursue nuclear technology.
- It makes a counter balance to western and chinese influence on global south.
- As a part of BRICS, india strength its voice in discussion on global security and energy policies.

ADVANTAGES OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY:

- By adopting a policy that restricts the use of nuclear weapons to retaliation. India helps maintain strategic stability in the region.
- India's nuclear doctrine with emphasis on minimum credible deterrence, discourages the necessary proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- Helps maintaining the effective relation in the global south.

CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE:

- Ensuring sufficient nuclear capabilities without engaging in arm race is difficult, especially because of the regional tension between pakistan and China.
- Adhering to no first use policy which facing evolving strategic thread is very dangerous for national security.
- Rapid development in missile defence world wide requires great investments in the nuclear sector.
- India faces diplomatic challenges related to global non - proliferation treaty

WAY FORWARD:

- India should continue advocating for global nuclear disarmament, ensuring compliance with non-proliferation norms.
- It should work on strengthening credible deterrence while ensuring transparency and strategic stability.
- Since 2003, there has been no major change in the doctrine; hence, India should revise it based on the current security situation.
- Considering the security dilemma and the emergence of new nuclear powers, India should reassess its No First Use (NFU) policy.
- India should strengthen its relations with the United States for technological advancements and emergency assistance.
- Additionally, India should engage in self-introspection regarding the ethical considerations of its nuclear policy.

By Rashi Sharma

Student Co-ordinator

Dhairya - The Civil Services Society



FOUNDATIONAL VALUES OF CIVIL SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

1. Definition of Civil Services:

Civil services refer to the permanent executive branch of the government, responsible for implementing policies and delivering public services.

2. Importance of Civil Services:

Civil services play a crucial role in governance, ensuring the effective implementation of policies and programs.

3. Foundational Values:

Foundational values refer to the core principles and values that guide the behavior and decision-making of civil servants.

II. Historical Context of Civil Services in India

1. British Era

The Indian Civil Service was established during the British era, with the objective of maintaining law and order and collecting revenue.

2. Post-Independence:

After independence, the Indian Civil Service was reconstituted as the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), with a focus on development administration.

3. Evolution of Civil Services:

Over time, the civil services have evolved to meet the changing needs of the country, with a growing focus on public administration and governance.

III. Core Values of Civil Services

1. Integrity:

Civil servants must maintain the highest level of integrity, avoiding conflicts of interest and upholding ethical standards.

2. Impartiality:

Civil servants must remain impartial, making decisions based on merit and fairness, rather than personal biases or interests.

3. Accountability:

Civil servants must be accountable for their actions, ensuring transparency and responsiveness in their decision-making.

4. Objectivity:

Decisions should be based on facts, evidence, and rational thinking.

5. Commitment to Public Service:

Civil servants must be committed to serving the public interest, prioritizing the needs of citizens and communities.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES OF CIVIL SERVICES

IV. Ethical Dimensions of Civil Services

1. Code of Conduct:

Civil servants must adhere to a code of conduct, outlining the ethical standards and principles that guide their behavior.

2. **Conflict of Interest:** Civil servants must avoid conflicts of interest, ensuring that their personal interests do not influence their decision-making.

3. Gifts and Favors:

Civil servants must not accept gifts or favors that could influence their decision-making or compromise their integrity.

V. Constitutional and Legal Framework

The Indian Constitution provides the legal and institutional framework within which civil services operate. Key constitutional provisions related to civil services include:

Article 311 :

Provides protection to civil servants from arbitrary dismissal or reduction in rank, ensuring security of tenure.

Article 320 : Lays down the functions of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), including the recruitment of civil servants.

Article 335:

Focuses on the representation of backward classes in civil services, ensuring social justice and equality.

The Public Servants (Inquiries) Act, 1850 and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 are additional legal frameworks that define the ethical boundaries and punishments for misconduct within civil services.

VI. Public Administration and the Civil Services

1. Role of Civil Services:

Civil services play a crucial role in public administration, implementing policies and delivering public services.

2. Principles of Public Administration:

Civil servants must adhere to the principles of public administration, including transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

VII. Role of Foundational Values in Governance

1. Promoting Good Governance:

Foundational values promote good governance, ensuring that civil servants make decisions in the public interest.

2. Building Trust:

Foundational values help build trust between citizens and the government, ensuring that civil servants are accountable and responsive.

3. Ensuring Accountability:

Foundational values ensure accountability, providing a framework for civil servants to make decisions and take actions.

VIII. Challenges Faced by Civil Services in Upholding Foundational Values

1. Corruption:

Corruption is a significant challenge, undermining the integrity and accountability of civil servants.

2. Political Interference:

Political interference can compromise the impartiality and independence of civil servants.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES OF CIVIL SERVICES

3. Bureaucratic Red Tape:

Bureaucratic red tape can hinder the responsiveness and effectiveness of civil servants.

IX. Strategies to Strengthen Foundational Values

1. Training and Capacity Building:

Training and capacity building programs can help civil servants develop the skills and knowledge needed to uphold foundational values.

2. Code of Conduct:

A code of conduct can provide a framework for civil servants to make decisions and take actions.

3. Accountability Mechanisms:

Accountability mechanisms, such as audits and investigations, can help ensure that civil servants are accountable for their actions.

X. Civil Services and Nation-Building

1. Role of Civil Services:

Civil services play a crucial role in nation-building, implementing policies and delivering public services.

2. Promoting Economic Development:

Civil services can promote economic development, providing support for businesses and entrepreneurs.

3. Ensuring Social Justice:

Civil services can ensure social justice, providing support for marginalized and vulnerable communities.

XI. Conclusion

The foundational values of civil services—integrity, impartiality, professionalism, and accountability—are essential to the smooth functioning of government and the welfare of society. Upholding these values ensures that civil services remain true to their constitutional obligations and public service duties. However, challenges such as corruption, political interference, and bureaucratic inertia must be continuously addressed through reforms and better governance practices. In this way, civil services can contribute significantly to nation-building and the strengthening of democracy.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES OF CIVIL SERVICES

Write up

Civil services form the backbone of governance in any nation. In India, the civil services are guided by foundational values that ensure effective administration, uphold democratic principles, and promote national development. These values are integral to good governance and play a pivotal role in nation-building.

Historical Background of Civil Services in India

The Indian Civil Service (ICS) has its roots in the British colonial administration. It was established under Lord Cornwallis in the late 18th century and later formalized through the Government of India Act, 1858. After independence, the structure was retained but transformed into the All India Services, with the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) being established under Article 315 of the Constitution to ensure a meritocratic recruitment system.

Foundational Values of Civil Services

The foundational values of civil services in India are derived from constitutional provisions, ethical principles, and administrative needs. They can be categorised as follows:

1. Integrity and Honesty

- Integrity refers to adherence to moral and ethical principles, ensuring that civil servants work without corruption or bias.
- Honesty ensures transparency and accountability in decision-making.

2. Impartiality and Objectivity

- Impartiality ensures that civil servants serve all citizens equally, without bias towards caste, religion, or political ideology.
- Objectivity demands that decisions be based on facts and rational analysis rather than personal beliefs.

3. Commitment to Public Service

- The primary duty of civil servants is to serve the public interest above personal or sectional gains.
- This requires dedication, responsiveness, and sensitivity to the needs of marginalized sections.

4. Political Neutrality

- Civil servants must function independently of political influence and ensure continuity in governance despite political changes.
- This neutrality is essential for maintaining trust in the administrative machinery.

Role of Civil Services in Nation-Building

1. Policy Formulation and Implementation

- Civil servants assist in drafting policies based on research, field insights, and stakeholder consultations.
- They implement flagship programs like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), and Ayushman Bharat.

2. Maintenance of Law and Order

- The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) ensure peace, security, and conflict resolution.
- They handle crises like communal riots, terrorism, and insurgencies.

3. Strengthening Democracy and Governance

- Civil services act as a bridge between the government and the people.
- They oversee elections, conduct surveys, and ensure the proper functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

4. Economic Development and Infrastructure Growth

- Bureaucrats play a key role in implementing industrial policies, taxation systems, and ease of doing business reforms.
- They contribute to infrastructure projects like Smart Cities Mission, Bharatmala, and Digital India.

COMMITTEES THAT SHAPED FOUNDATIONAL VALUES:

1. Nolan committee:

It was established in 1944 and identified seven principles that should govern the conduct of civil servants. The seven principles are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

2. First administrative reform committee

Introduced the code of conduct for civil servants. And advocated the creation of Lokayukta and Lokpal. Other committees are the second administrative reforms committee (2005-2009), Santhanam committee (1962), Hota committee (2004) etc.

Conclusion

The civil services are the pillars of nation-building, ensuring continuity, stability, and good governance. By upholding foundational values and addressing challenges, they can further strengthen India's democratic and developmental journey. Effective reforms and ethical governance will enhance their role in making India a developed and inclusive society.

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Content Team

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THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC SURVEY



INTRODUCTION

The Indian Budget for the fiscal year 2025-26, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and the preceding Economic Survey have outlined the government's strategies to stimulate economic growth, enhance consumption, and address structural challenges. This analysis delves into the key aspects of both documents, assessing their implications for India's economic trajectory.

Economic Survey 2024-25: Overview

The Economic Survey, released on January 31, 2025, projects India's economy to grow between 6.3% and 6.8% in the upcoming fiscal year. This forecast, while optimistic, acknowledges a slowdown from previous years, attributed to factors such as sluggish manufacturing, persistent food inflation, and weak urban consumption.

Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran highlighted potential growth drivers, including a rebound in agricultural production and stable macroeconomic conditions. However, the survey also cautioned about external headwinds like geopolitical uncertainties and potential commodity price shocks that could impede growth.

Budget 2025-26: Key Highlights

1. Income Tax Reforms: A significant move in the budget is the reduction of personal income tax rates aimed at the salaried middle class. The tax exemption threshold has been raised to ₹1.28 million (approximately \$14,800) from the previous ₹700,000. This restructuring is designed to boost household consumption, savings, and investment by increasing disposable incomes.

2. Agricultural Initiatives: To reduce dependency on imports and enhance domestic production, the government has launched a six-year program to boost pulse and cotton production. This includes state agencies procuring crops at guaranteed prices and focusing on high-yielding seed development. Such measures aim to strengthen the agricultural sector, which employs a significant portion of the workforce.

3. Support for the Gig Economy: Recognizing the growing gig workforce, the budget proposes issuing identity cards to gig workers, facilitating their access to healthcare and welfare benefits. This initiative seeks to formalize and support a sector that is projected to employ over 23 million people by 2030.

THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC SURVEY

4. Investment in Startups and Innovation: The government plans to infuse more funds into startups, promoting innovation in partnership with the private sector. Programs to boost manufacturing and exports are also on the agenda, aiming to increase the share of manufacturing in the economy from the current 17% towards the long-standing goal of 25%.

5. Infrastructure and Energy: A notable initiative is the Nuclear Energy Mission, targeting the development of at least 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047. Additionally, efforts to enhance tourism-related employment through infrastructure improvements and better air connectivity are highlighted.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite these forward-looking measures, several challenges persist:

-Complex Tax Structures: Businesses continue to grapple with intricate tax systems and bureaucratic hurdles, often referred to as 'tax terrorism.' Cases like unexpected tax demands on companies have deterred further investments, underscoring the need for more streamlined regulations.

-Global Trade Uncertainties: The threat of tariffs from major trading partners, such as the U.S., poses risks to India's export sector. The government is considering new incentives for exporters to mitigate these challenges, with decisions expected soon.

-Regulatory Reforms: Recent appointments of new regulators to key financial positions signal a shift towards faster growth. However, concerns about the autonomy and accountability of these regulators have emerged, highlighting the delicate balance between government influence and independent oversight.

-Climate Change Impact: The Economic Survey emphasizes the need for climate adaptation strategies, noting that climate change could significantly reduce India's GDP by 2070. Prioritizing climate adaptation at both governmental and corporate levels is crucial for sustainable growth.

Conclusion

The 2025-26 Budget and the preceding Economic Survey reflect the Indian government's commitment to fostering economic growth through tax reforms, agricultural initiatives, support for emerging sectors, and infrastructure development. While these measures are poised to stimulate consumption and investment, addressing structural challenges such as regulatory complexities, global trade uncertainties, and climate risks remains imperative. A holistic approach that balances immediate economic stimuli with long-term sustainability will be essential to navigate the evolving economic landscape and achieve inclusive growth.

बजट और आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण

Write up

परिचय:

भारत का केन्द्रीय बजट और आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण देश की आर्थिक स्थिति और वित्तीय योजनाओं का एक महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है। बजट एक वित्तीय योजना है जो सरकार के अनुमानित राजस्व और व्यय को दर्शाती है यह आगामी वित्तीय वर्ष के लिए सरकार की प्राथमिकताओं और नीतियों को दर्शाती है बजट में विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के लिए आवंटन की नीतियों में बदलाव और राजकोषीय घाटे का अनुमान शामिल है।

बजट:

- राजस्व और व्यय: बजट में राजस्व और व्यय का विवरण होता है जिसमें सरकार की आय और व्यय की जानकारी दी जाती है।
- कर और सब्सिडी: बजट में करों और सब्सिडियों की जानकारी दी जाती है जो देश की आर्थिक नीतियों को प्रभावित करती है।
- विकास योजनाएं: बजट में विकास योजनाओं के लिए आवंटित राशि की जानकारी दी जाती है जो देश के विकास को बढ़ावा देता है।

आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण :- आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण एक रिपोर्ट है जो पिछले वित्तीय वर्ष में देश की अर्थव्यवस्था के प्रदर्शन का विश्लेषण करती है, यह विभिन्न आर्थिक संकट को जैसे जीडीपी, विकास दर, मुद्रा स्थिति, बेरोजगारी और राजकोषीय घाटे का मूल्यांकन करता है। आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण में सरकार की नीतियों के प्रभाव और भविष्य की आर्थिक संभावनाओं पर भी चर्चा की जाती है।

- आर्थिक विकास: आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण में देश के आर्थिक विकास की जानकारी दी जाती है जिसमें जीडीपी, विकास दर, मुद्रा स्थिति दर और अन्य आर्थिक संकेतकों की जानकारी शामिल होती है।
- क्षेत्रीय विकास: आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण में क्षेत्रीय विकास की जानकारी दी जाती है जिसमें विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के आर्थिक विकास की जानकारी शामिल होती है।
- नीतिगत सिफारिश: आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण में नीतिगत सिफारिश से दी जाती है जो देश के आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देने के लिए की जाती है।

निष्कर्ष:

बजट और आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण दोनों ही सरकार, नीति निर्माता, निवेशकों और आम जनता के लिए महत्वपूर्ण दस्तावेज हैं। बजट सरकार को अपनी नीतियों को लागू करने और देश के विकास के लिए संसाधनों का आवंटन करने में मदद करती है और आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति के बारे में जानकारी देती है और भविष्य की नीतियों के लिए मार्गदर्शन करती है। बजट और आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण दोनों ही देश की अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए महत्वपूर्ण दस्तावेज हैं। दोनों एक दूसरे से जुड़े हुए हैं लेकिन उनके उद्देश्यों और समग्रि में कुछ महत्वपूर्ण अंतर हैं दोनों दस्तावेजों को समझ कर हम देश की अर्थशास्त्र सरकार की नीतियों के बारे में अधिक जान सकते हैं।

By Rakhi kumari Sharma
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REPUBLIC OF INDIA



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Republic of India, the world's largest democracy, has continuously evolved since adopting its Constitution on January 26, 1950. This transformation from a dominion under British rule to a sovereign republic laid the foundation for a governance system based on justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. As India stands in 2025, assessing its journey, governance, economic progress, and global role provides insight into its future trajectory.

Historical Background

India's transition to a republic was a landmark event following its independence in 1947. The drafting of the Constitution, led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and other visionaries, aimed to establish a democratic and inclusive framework. Over the decades, India has witnessed political stability, constitutional amendments, and landmark judicial decisions that have shaped its governance. The balance between democratic principles and administrative reforms has been a continuous process, ensuring that the nation remains committed to its foundational values.

Governance and Political Landscape in 2025

In 2025, India's governance system remains centered on its parliamentary democracy, with a focus on policy reforms and institutional accountability. The recent general elections of 2024 have influenced the political landscape, determining leadership priorities and governance strategies. Institutions such as the Parliament, judiciary, and Election Commission continue to play a crucial role in upholding democratic principles. Additionally, federalism and Centre-State relations remain critical in addressing regional aspirations and administrative efficiency.

REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Economic and Social Progress

India's economy in 2025 is marked by rapid technological advancements, digital transformation, and infrastructure growth. As one of the fastest-growing economies, India's focus remains on sectors like manufacturing, services, and renewable energy. However, challenges such as unemployment, inflation, and income disparity persist, necessitating inclusive policies. Socially, the government's emphasis on healthcare, education, and rural development continues to shape the well-being of citizens. Initiatives aimed at improving literacy rates, medical accessibility, and women's empowerment have shown progress, though gaps remain in ensuring equitable growth. The role of technology in governance, including digital payments and artificial intelligence-driven public services, has further modernized administrative mechanisms.

India's Role in Global Affairs

On the international stage, India continues to assert its position as a key player in global diplomacy. As an influential member of organizations like the United Nations, G20, and BRICS, India actively engages in discussions on trade, climate change, and security. Relations with neighboring countries and strategic partnerships with global powers shape its foreign policy approach in 2025. Additionally, defense modernization and space exploration contribute to India's emerging leadership in science and technology.

Challenges and the Road Ahead

Despite its progress, India faces multiple challenges that require policy-driven solutions. Internally, issues related to political stability, communal harmony, and governance reforms demand continuous efforts to uphold democratic values. Economic disparities, environmental concerns, and rapid urbanization also pose hurdles to sustainable development. Externally, shifting global power dynamics, border security, and trade dependencies necessitate strategic decision-making. Balancing economic aspirations with environmental sustainability remains a crucial challenge for long-term growth.

Conclusion

India's journey as a republic has been marked by resilience, adaptability, and progress. As it moves forward in 2025, strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring economic sustainability, and fostering social harmony remain key objectives. The nation's ability to address challenges while embracing innovation and inclusivity will define its future. Ultimately, the responsibility of preserving and advancing India's republican ideals lies not only with the government but also with its citizens, who play a vital role in shaping the nation's destiny.

INDIA AT 75: A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND UNITY

Write up

Introduction

India's journey since independence in 1947 has been marked by resilience, transformation, and unity. Over the past 75 years, the nation has emerged as a global powerhouse, overcoming numerous challenges and embracing opportunities for growth and development. Today, as we look back at this remarkable journey, we celebrate India's achievements in economic progress, social transformation, and the enduring spirit of unity that binds the nation together.

Economic Growth and Global Standing

One of the most defining aspects of India's progress has been its economic growth. From a struggling post-colonial economy in 1947 to becoming the world's fifth-largest economy today, India has made significant strides. The economic liberalization of 1991 was a turning point, opening doors to globalization, foreign investments, and industrial expansion. Today, India is a leader in technology, space exploration, and digital innovation, with initiatives like Digital India, Make in India, and Startup India driving economic self-reliance. The recent success of Chandrayaan-3 and the country's growing influence in global affairs further solidify India's position on the world stage.

Social Transformation and Inclusive Development

India's progress is not just limited to economic achievements; it has also witnessed remarkable social transformation. Government initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ayushman Bharat, and rural electrification have significantly improved the quality of life for millions.

The right to education, gender equality, and healthcare reforms have empowered marginalized communities, ensuring inclusive growth. The Green Revolution and White Revolution played pivotal roles in achieving food security, making India self-sufficient in agriculture.

Unity in Diversity: India's Greatest Strength

Despite its vast cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, India stands strong as a united nation. The principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family—has been deeply ingrained in Indian society. Be it during natural calamities, economic crises, or global challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, India has demonstrated an unbreakable spirit of unity and resilience. The success of democratic institutions, free media, and a vibrant civil society reflects the strength of India's foundational values.

Looking Ahead: Viksit Bharat 2047

As India marches toward Viksit Bharat 2047, the goal is to become a developed nation with a strong economy, sustainable environment, and technological advancements. With a young, dynamic population, India holds immense potential to shape the future. The focus must remain on education, skill development, innovation, and environmental sustainability to ensure holistic progress. India's 75-year journey is a story of determination and hope. While challenges remain, the path forward is promising. As responsible citizens, we must contribute to this progress and uphold the values that define our great nation.

By Preeti Gulia
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FOCUS
OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY



Focus of the month

THE US-RUSSIA LETTER

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has remained one of the most complex geopolitical crises of the 21st century. In early March 2025, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's letter to U.S. President Donald Trump expressed Ukraine's readiness for peace negotiations. This diplomatic move has triggered significant political, legal, and military responses, marking a potential turning point in the conflict.

Background: The Russia-Ukraine Conflict

1. Origins of the Conflict

The conflict began in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea following Ukraine's pro-European Maidan Revolution. This was followed by Moscow's support for separatist groups in the Donbas region (Donetsk and Luhansk). The conflict escalated in February 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, resulting in heavy casualties and global economic disruption.

2. Key Stakeholders

Ukraine: Defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia: Aiming to assert regional dominance and counter Western influence.

United States & NATO: Providing military, economic, and diplomatic support to Ukraine.

European Union (EU): Balancing diplomatic efforts while supporting Ukraine economically and militarily.

The Letter from President Zelensky: Key Details and Implications

On March 4, 2025, President Trump revealed that Ukrainian President Zelensky had sent a letter expressing Ukraine's willingness to restart peace negotiations.

Key Points in Zelensky's Letter:

Ukraine's readiness to engage in meaningful peace talks.

Emphasis on Ukraine's desire to achieve a sustainable ceasefire.

Acknowledgment that "nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians," signaling Ukraine's exhaustion from the prolonged war.

Significance of the Letter:

This marked a potential diplomatic shift after months of military stalemate.

It raised questions about how international actors, especially the United States, Russia, and Europe, would respond.

Reactions to the Letter

1. Russia's Response

The Kremlin welcomed Zelensky's letter as a "positive gesture."

However, Russian officials stressed that peace talks must adhere to existing conditions, including Ukraine's recognition of Russian-held territories – a major point of contention.

Russia highlighted that Ukrainian law currently prohibits direct talks between Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin, complicating diplomatic progress.

2. U.S. Response

President Trump expressed optimism, stating that both Ukraine and Russia were showing "strong signals" of readiness for peace.

However, Trump's administration simultaneously paused U.S. military aid and intelligence-sharing with Ukraine, raising concerns about Ukraine's defensive capabilities.

3. European Response

European nations proposed forming a "Coalition of the Willing" to ensure continued military and economic support for Ukraine.

This move reflects Europe's growing concern over U.S. policy shifts and the need to counter Russian aggression independently.

Legal Challenges to Peace Negotiations

1. Ukraine's 2022 Decree on Putin Negotiations

Following Russia's large-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine passed a law explicitly banning President Zelensky from negotiating directly with President Putin. This legal restriction was enacted to prevent diplomatic coercion under military pressure.

2. Implications of the Legal Barrier

While Zelensky's peace offer is significant, initiating talks would require parliamentary approval or an amendment to existing laws. The Kremlin has cited this legal barrier as evidence of Ukraine's unwillingness to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Recent Developments and Strategic Moves

1. Zelensky's 'Sky and Sea' Ceasefire Proposal

To build momentum for peace talks, President Zelensky proposed a limited ceasefire in aerial and naval operations.

This targeted truce aims to stabilize key trade routes, reduce civilian casualties, and build trust ahead of broader negotiations.

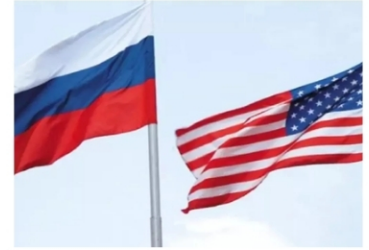
2. U.S. Suspension of Military Aid

In a surprising move, the U.S. temporarily halted military aid and intelligence-sharing with Ukraine after diplomatic tensions arose. This shift has raised concerns in Kyiv about Ukraine's ability to resist Russian offensives without American support.

3. European 'Coalition of the Willing'

In response to the U.S. suspension, European leaders launched discussions to sustain military aid independently.

Countries like France, Germany, and Poland are spearheading efforts to provide financial and strategic resources to Ukraine.



4. Escalation in Hostilities

Despite diplomatic moves, Russian forces have intensified their assault on key Ukrainian regions like Kursk, forcing Ukrainian troops to retreat. This military escalation has prompted Zelensky to urge the international community for increased sanctions on Russia.

Humanitarian and Economic Impact

Over 15 million people have been displaced since the war began, creating a humanitarian crisis in Eastern Europe.

Destruction of key infrastructure, including energy facilities and supply routes, has significantly impacted Ukraine's economy.

The ongoing conflict has triggered global economic concerns, contributing to food shortages, energy crises, and rising inflation in various parts of the world.

Geopolitical Implications

The U.S. policy shift reflects growing political debates within Washington regarding continued support for Ukraine.

Russia's continued aggression highlights Moscow's broader ambition to reshape European security dynamics.

The Saudi Arabia peace talks, where Zelensky's 'Sky and Sea' proposal is expected to be discussed, will test global diplomatic cohesion in addressing the crisis.

Key Challenges Moving Forward

1. **Legal Barriers:** Ukraine must revise or suspend the 2022 Decree to initiate direct talks with Russia.
2. **Military Pressure:** Continued hostilities could undermine peace efforts, especially without stable Western military support.
3. **Mistrust and Political Tensions:** Russia's demand for territorial concessions remains a major obstacle to peace.
4. **Economic Stability:** Sustaining Ukraine's economy amid war will require sustained financial backing from Western allies.

Conclusion

President Zelensky's letter, while significant, is just the starting point in a long and uncertain peace process. Legal constraints, shifting alliances, and continued military escalations present formidable challenges. Nevertheless, initiatives such as the 'Sky and Sea' ceasefire and Europe's 'Coalition of the Willing' reflect ongoing diplomatic efforts to restore stability.

Achieving lasting peace will require:

Legal flexibility within Ukraine's framework to enable direct negotiations. Sustained diplomatic pressure on Russia to engage constructively. Unified international support to balance peace talks with Ukraine's security concerns.

The evolving situation underscores the need for comprehensive diplomacy backed by strategic resilience to ensure a stable and just resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Focus of the month

NAKSHA SCHEME – ADVANCING GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT

The NAKSHA Scheme (National Action for Kartography and Survey for Harnessing Accurate Geospatial Applications) is a strategic initiative launched by the Government of India to enhance the country's geospatial infrastructure. The scheme aims to improve mapping technologies, enable precise land surveys, and promote data-driven decision-making in various sectors.

Background: Evolution of Geospatial Policies in India

1. Pre-2021 Geospatial Policy

India's geospatial data ecosystem was previously governed by restrictive policies that limited public access to high-accuracy data. Mapping data was primarily controlled by government agencies such as the Survey of India and ISRO, restricting innovation in the private sector.

2. 2021 Geospatial Policy Liberalization

In February 2021, the Indian government announced a Geospatial Data Policy aimed at: Easing access to geospatial data for Indian entities. Encouraging startups and private players to develop innovative mapping solutions. Reducing bureaucratic control over data collection and sharing.

3. NAKSHA Scheme: A Step Forward

The NAKSHA Scheme builds on this policy framework to create a more streamlined and accessible geospatial ecosystem. The scheme aligns with India's broader objectives of Digital India, Smart Cities, and Infrastructure Development.

Key Objectives of the NAKSHA Scheme

1. Enhanced Mapping Capabilities:

Develop high-resolution digital maps with improved accuracy for urban planning, disaster management, and environmental conservation.

2. Promoting Indigenous Technologies:

Support Indian startups, research institutions, and private firms in developing geospatial solutions.

3. Streamlined Data Access:

Establish a unified Geospatial Data Platform to ensure accessible and transparent data for public and private users.

4. Improved Land Governance:

Digitization of land records using precise satellite-based mapping to resolve land disputes and enhance property rights.

5. Disaster Management and Environmental Protection:

Utilize geospatial data to predict and mitigate natural disasters, monitor deforestation, and track environmental changes.

Legal and Constitutional Framework for Geospatial Data

1. Survey of India Act, 1958

This act grants the Survey of India the authority to create and regulate geospatial data for defense and civilian purposes. Under the NAKSHA Scheme, this role has expanded to include digital mapping for public use.

2. The National Map Policy (2005)

This policy defines guidelines for the dissemination of topographical maps. It restricts access to certain sensitive data, ensuring national security while promoting data sharing.

3. Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000

The IT Act provides a legal framework for digital data security, privacy, and cybercrime prevention, which is crucial for secure geospatial data management.

4. Environmental Protection Act, 1986

The NAKSHA Scheme integrates geospatial data to monitor environmental conditions, deforestation, and pollution control under this act.

5. Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act, 2013

The digitization of land records using geospatial tools under the NAKSHA Scheme aims to prevent disputes, ensuring fair compensation during land acquisition processes.

Key Features of the NAKSHA Scheme

1. Integration with Digital India Initiatives

The scheme will merge with platforms like Bhuvan, DigiLocker, and SVAMITVA to improve public access to geospatial data.

2. Focus on Smart Cities Development

Geospatial mapping will aid in designing smart infrastructure, efficient traffic management, and urban planning.

3. Empowering Startups and MSMEs

Indian startups will be given priority access to geospatial data, encouraging innovation in sectors such as agriculture, logistics, and e-commerce.

4. Enhancing Border Security and Defense

Accurate mapping under the NAKSHA Scheme will assist defense forces in monitoring border territories, ensuring national security.



Current Developments and News Highlights

1. Launch of Digital Mapping Portals:

The government recently unveiled a National Geospatial Portal to streamline public access to mapping data.

2. Integration with the SVAMITVA Scheme:

The NAKSHA Scheme has been integrated with the SVAMITVA Scheme to facilitate property ownership verification through drone-based surveys.

3. Private Sector Involvement:

Startups like MapmyIndia, CE Info Systems, and Genesys International have partnered with the government to develop cutting-edge mapping technologies.

4. Defense Mapping Initiatives:

The Ministry of Defence has collaborated with the Survey of India to improve real-time border surveillance using geospatial intelligence.

Interlinking NAKSHA Scheme with Key National Programs

1. Digital India:

The NAKSHA Scheme supports Digital India's goal of data democratization by improving geospatial data access.

2. Smart Cities Mission:

Accurate mapping solutions are essential for effective smart city planning, including waste management, transportation, and utility services.

3. SVAMITVA Scheme:

NAKSHA's integration with drone-based land mapping will accelerate property ownership verification in rural areas.

4. Bharatmala and Sagarmala Projects:

Geospatial data under NAKSHA will assist in optimizing road, rail, and port infrastructure under these key development projects.

Challenges and Way Forward

1. Data Privacy Concerns:

Ensuring sensitive geospatial data remains secure, especially in sectors like defense and internal security.

2. Technological Gaps:

While the NAKSHA Scheme promotes indigenous technology development, improving technical infrastructure will be essential.

3. Awareness and Training:

Training local governance bodies and startups in using geospatial tools effectively is critical for maximizing the scheme's impact.

4. Ensuring Data Standardization:

Developing unified data formats across various agencies to promote seamless integration.

Conclusion

The NAKSHA Scheme is poised to revolutionize India's geospatial ecosystem by integrating modern mapping technologies with national development initiatives. By easing data accessibility, promoting indigenous innovation, and enhancing land governance, the scheme addresses key developmental challenges. Successful implementation will require coordinated efforts between the government, private sector, and scientific institutions to maximize its impact.

The NAKSHA Scheme aligns with India's broader vision of becoming a global geospatial leader while ensuring data security, environmental sustainability, and infrastructure development.

Focus of the month

PRESIDENT'S RULE IMPOSED IN MANIPUR

Introduction

In February 2025, President's Rule was imposed in Manipur following the resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. The state had been grappling with prolonged ethnic violence, political instability, and a breakdown of law and order, making governance increasingly difficult. As per the provisions of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, the central government assumed direct control over the state administration, citing the failure of constitutional machinery. This development is significant as it reflects the ongoing governance crisis in Manipur and raises important questions about federalism, state autonomy, and the role of the central government in maintaining stability.

Historical Background

President's Rule in India is governed by Article 356, which allows the President to take over a state's administration if the state government is unable to function according to constitutional provisions. This provision has been invoked multiple times across India, often in situations of political deadlock or law and order breakdown. Manipur has witnessed President's Rule in the past, primarily due to political instability and insurgency-related concerns. The state has a history of ethnic tensions and armed conflicts, which have frequently led to governance challenges. Understanding this historical context is crucial in analyzing the recent imposition of President's Rule.

Recent Developments Leading to President's Rule

The immediate trigger for President's Rule in Manipur was the resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on February 9, 2025. His resignation came amid threats of a no-confidence motion and his administration's inability to control escalating ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities. The conflict had been ongoing for over 20 months, resulting in casualties, displacement, and a deteriorating law and order situation. Reports from the Governor and other authorities highlighted the state government's failure to restore peace, ultimately prompting central intervention.

Constitutional and Political Implications

The imposition of President's Rule raises constitutional and political debates. While it is a legally sanctioned measure, its application has often been criticized for undermining state autonomy and democratic governance. Political parties have responded differently—some viewing it as a necessary step to restore order, while others argue that it sets a dangerous precedent for central intervention. The move also impacts governance, administration, and central-state relations, influencing how federalism functions in India.

Socio-Economic Consequences

The socio-economic impact of President's Rule in Manipur is significant. The ongoing ethnic violence has disrupted businesses, education, and daily life. The uncertainty surrounding governance has further strained economic activities, with local businesses struggling to operate. Civil society organizations and local communities have been vocal about the need for peace and reconciliation, emphasizing the importance of restoring normalcy and addressing the root causes of conflict.

National and Regional Reactions

The imposition of President's Rule has elicited varied responses. National political parties have reacted along partisan lines, with some supporting the decision as necessary for restoring stability, while others have criticized it as an overreach by the central government. Neighboring states have expressed concerns about the spillover effects of the conflict, particularly in terms of security and migration. Internationally, the situation has drawn attention to India's handling of internal conflicts and human rights concerns in conflict-affected regions.



Possible Future Scenarios

Looking ahead, several outcomes are possible. If stability is restored, fresh elections may be held to re-establish an elected government. However, if the law and order situation remains volatile, central rule may be extended. There is also the possibility of implementing special administrative measures to address the ethnic and political challenges unique to Manipur. Experts emphasize the need for inclusive governance, conflict resolution mechanisms, and long-term policy interventions to prevent further crises.

Conclusion

The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur underscores the complexities of governance in regions with deep-rooted ethnic divisions. It highlights the delicate balance between federalism and central intervention, emphasizing the need for strong institutions and conflict-resolution mechanisms. While the immediate priority is restoring stability, this situation serves as a crucial lesson for strengthening democratic governance, addressing socio-political grievances, and ensuring that such crises are handled with sensitivity and inclusivity in the future.

Focus of the month

DELHI ELECTIONS

Introduction

The 2025 Delhi Assembly Election, held on February 5, 2025, marked a pivotal moment in the political landscape of India's capital territory. This election was significant as it determined the governance of Delhi, impacting policies on development, education, healthcare, pollution, and law and order. The major political parties in contention were the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Indian National Congress (INC). The electoral stakes were high, with each party presenting its vision for addressing the pressing issues faced by Delhi's residents. The election discourse was dominated by debates on governance performance, infrastructural development, environmental concerns, and public services, setting the stage for a closely watched political contest.

Historical Background

Delhi's political landscape has undergone significant transformations over the past few decades. The Indian National Congress dominated the capital's politics until the emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party in 2013, which capitalized on anti-corruption sentiments and secured consecutive victories in 2015 and 2020. The AAP's governance model focused on enhancing public services like education and healthcare, earning widespread acclaim. However, over time, challenges such as environmental degradation, infrastructural bottlenecks, and allegations of administrative inefficiencies emerged, influencing public perception and setting the context for the 2025 elections.

Political Dynamics and Key Players

The 2025 election featured intense competition among the major political entities. The AAP, led by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, sought a third consecutive term, emphasizing its track record in public service delivery. The BJP, under the leadership of Rekha Gupta, aimed to reclaim power after a 27-year hiatus, focusing on issues like corruption and environmental management. The Congress party, despite its diminished presence in recent years, endeavored to regain relevance by addressing concerns such as pollution and unemployment. Each party faced internal challenges and strategized alliances to bolster their electoral prospects, making the political dynamics particularly intricate.

Major Issues in the Election

Several critical issues shaped voter preferences in the 2025 election. The governance performance of the incumbent AAP government was scrutinized, with debates on the effectiveness of its policies in education and healthcare. Infrastructure development, particularly public transport and waste management, emerged as focal points. Environmental concerns, notably air pollution and the cleanliness of the Yamuna River, were pressing issues, with over 80% of voters highlighting these as major concerns. Law and order, water and electricity supply, unemployment, and economic growth were also significant topics addressed in party manifestos, reflecting the multifaceted challenges facing Delhi.

Public Sentiment and Opinion Polls

Pre-election surveys and opinion polls indicated a competitive race, with the BJP gaining momentum due to public dissatisfaction with the AAP's handling of environmental and civic issues. Allegations of corruption further influenced public perception, with nearly two-thirds of respondents perceiving the AAP government as corrupt. These factors contributed to a shifting voter sentiment, signaling potential changes in the political landscape.

Election Campaigns and Strategies

The election campaigns were marked by vigorous efforts from all parties. The AAP highlighted its achievements in public service delivery, while the BJP focused on anti-corruption narratives and environmental management. The Congress party addressed issues like pollution, inflation, and unemployment through initiatives like the 'Dilli Nyay Yatra'. Social media, rallies, and outreach programs were extensively utilized, with each party aiming to resonate with the electorate's concerns. Controversies, political attacks, and major announcements further shaped the campaign dynamics, reflecting the high stakes of the election.



Possible Scenarios and Predictions

Based on prevailing trends and analyses, the election outcome was anticipated to be closely contested. Scenarios ranged from a clear majority for the BJP, a hung assembly necessitating coalitions, to potential upsets altering the political equation. Experts emphasized the electorate's focus on governance issues, environmental management, and anti-corruption measures as pivotal factors influencing the election's direction.

Conclusion

The 2025 Delhi Assembly Election underscored the dynamic nature of urban governance and the electorate's evolving priorities. The BJP's victory, securing 48 out of 70 seats, marked a significant political shift, ending the AAP's decade-long governance. This outcome not only redefined Delhi's administrative trajectory but also had broader implications for national politics, reflecting changing voter sentiments and setting the tone for future electoral contests in India.

Focus of the month

INDIA'S MARITIME VISION 2030

Definition: India's Maritime Vision 2030 is a long-term strategic blueprint designed to transform the country's maritime sector into a key driver of economic growth. It aims to enhance India's global maritime trade position, modernize port infrastructure, promote sustainability, and create employment opportunities.

Objective: The primary goal is to position India as a global maritime power by leveraging its strategic geographic location, extensive coastline (7,516 km), and vast maritime resources. The vision focuses on strengthening India's shipping, port management, logistics, and technological innovation to boost trade, economic growth, and sustainability.

II. Background and Need for Maritime Vision 2030

India has a 7,500-kilometer-long coastline and 12 major ports, handling 95% of trade by volume and 70% by value. The maritime sector has enormous potential to boost economic growth, but several challenges hinder its development:

1. **Infrastructure Bottlenecks:** Indian ports need modernization to improve efficiency and reduce logistics costs.
2. **Global Competitiveness:** India's share in global shipping is only 1.2%, while countries like China dominate.
3. **Shipbuilding & Repair Industry:** India has limited shipbuilding capacity, with most ships being built in China, South Korea, and Japan.
4. **Maritime Security & Environmental Concerns:** Piracy, marine pollution, and climate change are significant threats that need to be addressed.

To overcome these challenges, Maritime Vision 2030 provides a structured approach for growth and sustainability in the sector

III. Key Objectives of Maritime Vision 2030

The vision document outlines several key objectives to transform the Indian maritime sector:

1. Increasing India's Share in Global Shipping

India's current share in global shipping is just 1.2%.

The goal is to increase this to 5% by 2030 by developing indigenous shipping companies, promoting ship leasing, and expanding India's merchant fleet.

2. Developing World-Class Ports

Enhancing port efficiency, productivity, and sustainability to compete with global ports like Singapore and Rotterdam. Introducing automation and digitalization for faster cargo handling.

3. Promoting Shipbuilding and Repair

Establishing financial assistance policies and subsidies to boost India's shipbuilding industry. Encouraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) in shipbuilding and maintenance.

4. Enhancing Maritime Safety and Security

Implementing stricter safety regulations for Indian ports and vessels. Strengthening anti-piracy measures and improving marine pollution control mechanisms.

IV. Major Initiatives Under Maritime Vision 2030

To achieve these objectives, the government has launched several initiatives:

1. Sagarmala Programme

A flagship initiative to promote port-led development by improving infrastructure and connectivity. Focus on modernizing existing ports, developing new deep-water ports, and enhancing inland waterways.

2. Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy

Providing financial incentives to Indian shipbuilders to make them globally competitive. Encouraging domestic shipbuilding to reduce dependency on foreign-built vessels.

3. Maritime Cluster Development

Creating hubs for maritime trade and commerce by integrating ports, shipyards, and logistics hubs. Encouraging investment in coastal industrial zones.

V. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure is the backbone of India's maritime ambitions. Maritime Vision 2030 focuses on:

Building New Ports: Identifying locations for new deep-draft ports to handle large vessels.

Modernizing Existing Ports: Upgrading cargo handling, automation, and digitalization.

Improving Inland Waterways: Promoting river transport and multimodal logistics to reduce logistics costs.

Developing Maritime Training Institutes: Strengthening maritime education and skill development to create a skilled workforce.

VI. Technology and Innovation in the Maritime Sector

The document highlights technology and innovation as key drivers for modernizing the maritime industry. Key focus areas include:

1. Adoption of Emerging Technologies

Blockchain for logistics to enhance transparency in shipping transactions. Artificial Intelligence (AI) for predictive maintenance and efficient cargo handling. Internet of Things (IoT) for smart port operations and real-time monitoring.

2. Development of Maritime Clusters

Establishing integrated maritime clusters to encourage technology-driven growth.



VII. Implementation and Monitoring

To ensure effective execution, a high-level committee chaired by the Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways will oversee progress. The committee will track key performance indicators (KPIs) and address implementation challenges.

VIII. Expected Impact of Maritime Vision 2030

If successfully implemented, Maritime Vision 2030 will have the following positive outcomes:

1. Economic Growth

The maritime sector is expected to significantly contribute to India's GDP. It will reduce logistics costs, boosting overall economic efficiency.

2. Improved Global Competitiveness

Indian ports and shipping companies will become more competitive globally. The shipbuilding industry will grow, reducing dependence on imports.

3. Enhanced Maritime Security and Sustainability

Improved coastal security and anti-piracy measures. Reduction in marine pollution and carbon emissions.

IX. Challenges in Implementing Maritime Vision 2030

Despite its ambitious goals, several challenges must be addressed:

1. Infrastructure Constraints

Indian ports lack world-class facilities and require massive investments for expansion and modernization.

2. Regulatory Hurdles

The maritime sector is governed by multiple regulations, leading to delays and inefficiencies. Need for simplified policies and single-window clearance.

3. Environmental Concerns

Coastal development projects can impact marine biodiversity. The industry needs to adopt green shipping technologies.

X. Way Forward

To achieve the goals of Maritime Vision 2030, India must:

Invest Heavily in Infrastructure: Focus on port modernization, inland waterways, and smart logistics. Simplify Regulations: Introduce a single-window clearance system for maritime projects. Promote Green Shipping: Encourage sustainable practices like using LNG-powered vessels. Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Attract global investment in ports and shipbuilding.

XI. Conclusion

India's Maritime Vision 2030 is a comprehensive, future-oriented strategy designed to transform the maritime sector into a global leader. By focusing on infrastructure development, technology adoption, and sustainability, the vision has the potential to:

Boost India's economic growth
Strengthen India's position in global shipping
Enhance maritime security and environmental sustainability

However, for the vision to succeed, efficient implementation, policy reforms, and private sector participation will be crucial. If executed effectively, India could emerge as a major maritime power by 2030, driving growth, trade, and innovation in the sector.

Focus of the month

INDIA-QATAR RELATIONS

I. Introduction

India and Qatar share deep-rooted historical, cultural, and economic ties, evolving into a strategic partnership over the years. The relationship is shaped by trade, energy security, defense cooperation, and the presence of a significant Indian diaspora in Qatar. The diplomatic engagement between the two nations has strengthened over time, with regular high-level visits and agreements to enhance bilateral collaboration.

II. Historical background

1971 : Qatar gained independence from British rule.

1973 : India and Qatar established formal diplomatic relations. India set up an embassy in Doha, while Qatar opened an embassy in New Delhi and a consulate in Mumbai.

III. Political relations

Political engagement between India and Qatar has been strengthened by high-level visits and strategic agreements.

2008 : India and Qatar signed a maritime defense agreement, marking an important step in security cooperation.

2015 : The two countries signed a prisoner repatriation agreement, enabling Indian nationals in Qatari prisons to serve their sentences in India.

February 2025 : Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in India to strengthen trade and investment ties.

IV . Economic and Trade Relations

Bilateral Trade

Trade between India and Qatar reached \$15 billion in 2022-2023, making Qatar one of India's most significant trade partners in the Middle East.

India's imports from Qatar primarily include liquefied natural gas (LNG), petroleum products, and fertilizers.

LNG and Energy Cooperation

India is highly dependent on Qatar for LNG. In recent years, Qatar has emerged as India's largest supplier of LNG.

A long-term LNG supply agreement worth \$78 billion was signed, ensuring India's energy security for decades.

Indian Investments in Qatar

Indian businesses have a strong presence in Qatar across construction, IT, healthcare, and finance sectors.

Companies like L&T, TCS, and HCL are actively involved in Qatar's infrastructure and technology sectors.

V . Defence Cooperation

India and Qatar have steadily strengthened defense cooperation, particularly in maritime security.

2008 Defence Cooperation Agreement: Focuses on joint military training, intelligence sharing, and security dialogues.

Maritime Defence Cooperation : Includes joint naval patrols, military exercises, and port calls by Indian naval ships in Qatari waters.

These defense ties are significant in ensuring maritime security in the Gulf region and the Indian Ocean.

VI. Cultural Relations

Cultural exchanges and the Indian diaspora form an essential pillar of India-Qatar relations.

Indian Diaspora

Over 7.5 lakh (750,000) Indians live and work in Qatar, making them the largest expatriate community in the country.

Indians contribute significantly to Qatar's workforce, particularly in construction, healthcare, IT, and banking sectors.

Cultural Exchange Programs

Regular exchange programs for students, artists, and cultural troupes promote deeper people-to-people connections.

Events like Qatar-India Cultural Year celebrations help strengthen mutual understanding and historical ties

VII.Recent Developments

June 2024 : Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Qatar to emphasize India's growing engagement with the Middle East.

February 2025 : India and Qatar agreed to establish a Joint Commission on Trade and Commerce to enhance economic ties and resolve trade challenges.



VIII. Challenges in India-Qatar Relations

Despite strong ties, certain challenges persist:

Trade Imbalance

India has a high trade deficit with Qatar due to large-scale imports of LNG and petroleum.

Diversifying trade to include more Indian exports can help address this imbalance.

Energy Security Dependence

India relies heavily on Qatar for LNG, making it vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply disruptions.

India is exploring alternative energy sources to reduce dependence.

Regional Geopolitical Dynamics

The Israel-Hamas conflict, US-Gulf relations, and tensions in the Middle East can indirectly impact India-Qatar relations. India must navigate these complexities while maintaining its energy and strategic interests.

IX. The Way Forward

To further strengthen India-Qatar relations, the following steps can be taken:

1. Strengthening Bilateral Ties

Expanding defense collaboration, especially in maritime security.

Enhancing partnerships in technology, startups, and artificial intelligence (AI).

2.Establishing a Joint Commission

The proposed India-Qatar Joint Commission on Trade and Commerce will review and resolve trade challenges.

It can help expand investments in sectors like renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and fintech.

3. Collaborating on Regional and Global Issues

Strengthening cooperation in counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and climate change.

Promoting peace and stability in the Gulf and Indo-Pacific regions through diplomatic engagements.

Conclusion

India-Qatar relations are built on a foundation of historical ties, economic interdependence, and strategic cooperation. While challenges remain, both countries are committed to deepening their partnership in trade, defense, and cultural exchange. With recent high-level engagements and agreements, the relationship is poised for further growth in the coming years.

Focus of the month

GYANESH KUMAR AS THE 26TH CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER OF INDIA

I. Introduction

The appointment of Gyanesh Kumar as the 26th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India marks a significant moment in the country's electoral governance. The role of the CEC is vital in ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections, which are the cornerstone of Indian democracy.

II. Appointment Process

The selection of the Chief Election Commissioner follows a structured and transparent process to uphold the credibility of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

- **Process of Appointment:** The CEC is appointed by the President of India based on recommendations from the government.
- **Role of Constitutional Bodies:** The Election Commission functions as an independent authority under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.
- **Comparison with Other Democracies:** Unlike India, some countries, such as the USA, have election commissions directly answerable to legislative bodies.
- **Significance of the Appointment:** Ensuring neutrality, credibility, and efficiency in electoral processes.

III. Background and Experience

Gyanesh Kumar brings extensive administrative experience to the role of CEC.

- **Education and Early Career:** Holding degrees in political science and public administration, Kumar has had a long career in governance.
- **Past Government Roles:** He has held key positions in the Ministry of Home Affairs, overseeing electoral processes and security matters.
- **Contributions to Electoral Governance:** Played a role in implementing electoral reforms, increasing voter awareness, and streamlining election management.

IV. Role and Responsibilities as CEC

The Chief Election Commissioner oversees India's electoral process, ensuring adherence to democratic principles.

- **Conduct of Elections:** Supervising Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Assembly elections.
- **Implementation of Electoral Laws:** Enforcing the Representation of the People Act and the Model Code of Conduct.
- **Voter Education and Participation:** Enhancing voter turnout through awareness campaigns.

V. Challenges Ahead

Despite India's robust electoral system, challenges persist:

- **Electoral Malpractices:** Addressing vote-buying, fake news, and manipulation.
- **Technology and Cybersecurity:** Safeguarding Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) from hacking threats.
- **Electoral Reforms:** Strengthening laws on political funding and transparency.



VI. Legal and Institutional Framework

The Election Commission of India operates within a robust legal framework:

- **Constitutional Provisions:** Article 324 grants the ECI autonomy.
- **Key Election Laws:** The Representation of the People Act, 1951, and the Model Code of Conduct regulate elections.
- **Judicial Oversight:** The Supreme Court has played a role in ensuring electoral fairness.

VII. Conclusion

Gyanesh Kumar's appointment as CEC is crucial in shaping India's electoral future.

- **Summary of His Role and Challenges:** He must uphold electoral integrity and introduce necessary reforms.
- **Future of India's Electoral System:** Strengthening transparency and accountability remains a priority.
- **Call for Electoral Modernization:** Implementing digital innovations while maintaining electoral security.

Focus of the month

THE PARIS AI SUMMIT: A GLOBAL STEP TOWARDS ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE AI DEVELOPMENT

I. Introduction

The Paris AI Summit, held in 2018, marked a significant milestone in the global quest for ethical and responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) development. The summit brought together international leaders, experts, and stakeholders to discuss the future of AI and its impact on society. As AI continues to reshape industries, governance, and daily life, it is imperative to ensure its ethical use and mitigate risks associated with its deployment.

- Overview of the Paris AI Summit
- Importance of ethical and responsible AI development
- The significance of international collaboration in AI governance

II. Background and Context

The rapid advancement of AI technologies has raised concerns about their potential misuse, bias, and societal impact. The need for ethical AI development has become urgent due to:

- Growing Influence of AI: AI applications have expanded across sectors, including healthcare, finance, and defense.
- Concerns Over AI Bias: AI systems often inherit biases from training data, leading to discriminatory outcomes.
- Privacy and Security Challenges: AI-driven data processing raises questions about data protection and user privacy.
- Global Regulatory Gaps: The lack of uniform AI governance frameworks results in inconsistent ethical standards worldwide.

In response, the French government initiated the Paris AI Summit to foster international cooperation and establish guidelines for responsible AI development.

III. Objectives and Outcomes of the Paris AI Summit

The summit aimed to:

- **Promote International Cooperation:** Encourage collaboration among nations to prevent AI monopolization and unethical applications.
- **Establish Ethical Guidelines:** Define responsible AI development frameworks focusing on fairness, transparency, and accountability.
- **Ensure AI Decision-Making Transparency:** Develop mechanisms to track AI-driven decisions and ensure accountability.

Major Outcomes:

- **Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace:** A framework for responsible AI and cybersecurity.
- **AI for Humanity Initiative:** Encouraging AI for social good, ensuring inclusivity in AI development.
- **Global AI Governance Framework:** Laying the foundation for international regulatory measures.
- **Commitment to AI Ethics:** Adoption of principles ensuring AI development aligns with human rights and democratic values.

IV. Key Issues Addressed: Ethics, Responsibility, and Governance

The summit tackled pressing concerns related to AI ethics and governance:

- **AI Bias and Fairness:** Addressing algorithmic bias that leads to discrimination in hiring, policing, and lending.
- **Transparency and Explainability:** Ensuring AI decisions are understandable and not opaque, particularly in high-risk applications like criminal justice and healthcare.
- **Accountability and Liability:** Establishing legal frameworks to hold AI developers and organizations responsible for harm caused by AI systems.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:** Strengthening laws to protect user data from exploitation and unauthorized use.
- **Autonomous Systems and AI in Warfare:** Ethical concerns about AI-powered weapons and decision-making in conflict zones.



Criticism and Debate Around the Volunteer System

- **Political Interference** – Critics argue that the system is used for vote-bank politics.
- **Questionable Efficiency** – Some claim that duplication of work happens with existing local bodies.
- **Transparency Issues** – Reports of favoritism and partiality in welfare distribution.
- **Sustainability Concerns** – The system relies on continuous funding, raising concerns about its future viability.

Way Forward

To strengthen the Andhra Pradesh Volunteer System, the following reforms are needed:

- **Transparent Selection Process** – Ensure merit-based recruitment of volunteers.
- **Regular Training Programs** – Capacity building for volunteers to improve service efficiency.
- **Independent Oversight** – Third-party audits to monitor performance and corruption.
- **Integration with Panchayati Raj** – Strengthen the link between volunteers and local self-governance institutions.
- **Sustainable Financial Model** – Explore alternative funding through public-private partnerships (PPP).

These reforms align with UPSC themes on governance reforms and public administration.

Conclusion

The Andhra Pradesh Volunteer System is a unique model of last-mile governance that has improved service delivery, employment, and citizen participation. While it faces challenges related to political influence and sustainability, with proper reforms, it can become a benchmark for decentralized governance in India.

Focus of the month

MAHAKUMBH 2025

I. 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.



5. Global Participation and Tourism Impact

International Recognition: Mahakumbh attracts pilgrims and scholars from across the world, promoting interfaith dialogue and spiritual unity.

Boost to Local Economy: Increased tourism benefits local businesses, artisans, and hospitality industries.

Cultural Exchange: Foreign visitors experience Indian spirituality, traditions, and rituals firsthand.

Conclusion

Mahakumbh 2025 is not just a religious congregation but a spiritual and cultural mega-event that unites millions in faith and devotion. It showcases India's rich heritage, promotes global harmony, and serves as a reminder of the eternal quest for divine wisdom and self-purification. With modern advancements ensuring a well-organized and sustainable event, Mahakumbh 2025 is set to leave a lasting impact on history, faith, and human connection.

EDITORIAL SECTION



Air Pollution and Its Global Mortality Impact

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

Introduction:

- Air pollution is one of the most pressing environmental and public health crises globally. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is responsible for one in nine deaths worldwide, contributing to approximately 7 million premature deaths annually.
- The State of Global Air 2024 report highlighted that 1 million deaths in 2021 were linked to air pollution, making it the second-leading risk factor for mortality, particularly affecting children under the age of five.
- The deteriorating air quality has led to widespread health concerns, economic burdens, and environmental degradation, making it not just a governance issue but a public health emergency of grave significance.

Health Impacts of Air Pollution

- **Respiratory Diseases:**
 - Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10), which consists of tiny solid and liquid particles, can deeply penetrate the lungs, causing lung inflammation, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, and respiratory infections.
 - Studies have linked PM2.5 exposure to lung cancer, DNA mutations, and chronic lung conditions.
- **Cardiovascular Disorders:**
 - Fine particulate matter affects the cardiovascular system, increasing the risk of heart attacks, hypertension, and stroke.
 - The State of Global Air report indicated that cardiovascular complications due to pollution are a major cause of death, particularly in urban areas.
- **Impact on Children and Cognitive Development:**
 - Prolonged exposure to PM2.5 affects children's cognitive development, leading to learning disabilities, anxiety, and mental health issues.
 - Studies suggest a strong link between air pollution and lower IQ levels, neurodevelopmental delays, and higher risks of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).
- **Elderly and Vulnerable Populations:**
 - Senior citizens and those with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes and hypertension are at higher risk due to weakened immune responses and aggravated heart conditions.
 - PM2.5 contributes to cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Economic Consequences of Air Pollution

- **Lower GDP Growth and Productivity Losses:**
 - The Dalberg Report (2019) estimated that air pollution costs Indian businesses \$95 billion annually (3% of GDP) due to decreased worker productivity and health-related absenteeism.
 - Air pollution-induced illnesses contribute to reduced workforce efficiency, higher insurance claims, and increased healthcare expenses.
- **Healthcare Burden:**
 - The rising number of cases of cancer, respiratory illnesses, and heart disease leads to escalating public and private healthcare costs.
- **Impact on Agriculture and Food Security:**
 - Pollutants such as ground-level ozone reduce crop yields, affecting food security and agricultural productivity.
 - Declining air quality disrupts pollination cycles, harming ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Tourism and Real Estate Impact:**
 - Air pollution affects the livability of cities, reducing real estate values and investor confidence.
 - Tourists avoid cities with hazardous air quality, leading to losses in the tourism sector.

Major Causes of Air Pollution

- **Vehicular Emissions:**
 - Transport contributes significantly to PM2.5 and PM10 levels, particularly in urban areas.
 - In Delhi, vehicular pollution accounts for 40% of PM2.5 emissions, with private vehicle ownership rising rapidly.
 - Diesel-powered vehicles release NO₂ and sulfur dioxide (SO₂), causing smog and acid rain.
- **Industrial Emissions:**
 - Factories release suspended particulate matter (SPM), carbon monoxide (CO), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
 - Poor enforcement of emission norms exacerbates pollution levels in industrial clusters like Ghaziabad, Ludhiana, and Kanpur.
- **Construction and Dust Pollution:**
 - Rapid urbanization has led to unchecked construction activity, which contributes to fly ash, cement particles, and dust pollution.
 - Poor waste disposal and road dust add to the worsening air quality.
- **Biomass and Stubble Burning:**
 - Agricultural stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana worsens pollution in Delhi and surrounding states.
 - The seasonal spike in PM2.5 levels due to biomass burning causes severe respiratory distress in urban populations.

Mitigation Strategies and Policy Interventions

- **Strengthening Public Transport Infrastructure:**
 - Only 39% of India's population has access to public transport, leading to higher private vehicle dependence.
 - Investments in metro rail expansion, electric buses, and last-mile connectivity can reduce vehicular emissions.
- **Enforcing Stricter Vehicular Emission Norms:**
 - Implementing Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) III & IV norms will encourage zero-emission vehicles and reduce fuel consumption.
 - Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) fuel standards need strict enforcement to curb vehicular pollutants.
- **Promoting Clean Energy Solutions:**
 - Expanding solar and wind energy projects will reduce reliance on coal-fired power plants.
 - Incentivizing electric vehicles (EVs), hydrogen fuel cells, and compressed natural gas (CNG) adoption is key to long-term air quality improvement.
- **Reducing Industrial Emissions:**
 - Installing scrubbers, electrostatic precipitators, and air filters in factories can cut emissions significantly.
 - Strengthening pollution control norms for industries and penalizing violations can ensure compliance.
- **Addressing Agricultural Pollution:**
 - Encouraging bio-decomposers and alternative stubble management solutions can eliminate crop burning.
 - Providing farmers with subsidies for eco-friendly disposal of agricultural waste is critical.
- **Urban Greening and Pollution Control Measures:**
 - Planting urban forests and green corridors can help absorb pollutants.
 - Increasing air quality monitoring stations will enhance real-time tracking and enforcement.

Conclusion

- The worsening air pollution crisis demands urgent, multi-pronged interventions. While India has set a target to reduce air pollution by 40% by 2026, achieving this goal requires strict policy enforcement, investment in clean energy, and large-scale behavioral change.
- The time to act is now—before the air we breathe becomes an irreversible crisis.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Demand for Legalising MSP

General Studies-3; Topic: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security.

Introduction:

- The renewed farmers' agitation at the Khanauri border between Punjab and Haryana, has reignited the debate on the necessity of a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Prices (MSP).

Background

- MSP is a government-set price at which crops are procured from farmers to ensure they get a minimum income, regardless of market fluctuations.
- Currently, MSP is announced for 22 crops, but procurement is largely confined to wheat and paddy.
- Farmers argue that an MSP without legal backing leaves them vulnerable to market forces, exploitative intermediaries, and agribusiness firms.
- Successive governments have avoided giving MSP a legal guarantee, citing concerns over market distortions, fiscal burdens, and WTO compliance.

Rising Support for a Legal MSP

- Various political parties and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture have voiced their support.
- State governments, such as Maharashtra and Karnataka, have attempted MSP enforcement through state-level initiatives.
- The Andhra Pradesh Farmers' Produce Support Price Act, 2023, provides a possible model, ensuring no transactions occur below MSP while enabling barrier-free trade.
- Farmers demand the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations of fixing MSP at 1.5 times the cost of production be implemented.

The Role of Intermediaries in Agrarian Markets

- A key roadblock to legal MSP is the entrenched trader-intermediary system, which benefits from price fluctuations.
- Retail markups over wholesale prices indicate that farmers receive a disproportionately low share of final consumer prices:
 - Rice in Karnataka: 120% markup
 - Gram in Tamil Nadu: 130% markup
 - Onion in Madhya Pradesh: 210% markup
- This highlights the need for direct market access for farmers, eliminating unnecessary intermediaries.

Challenges in Legalising Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- Providing a legal guarantee for MSP would require massive financial outlays. The government would need to procure, store, and distribute a vast quantity of crops, increasing fiscal pressure.
- Legal MSP enforcement could push up food inflation, affecting consumers, especially the poor and middle class.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) allows agricultural subsidies up to 10% of the total value of agricultural production. A legally backed MSP would likely exceed this limit, leading to trade disputes.
- Legal MSP could disrupt supply-demand equilibrium, leading to overproduction of certain crops and market inefficiencies.
- Farmers may focus only on MSP-backed crops, neglecting horticulture, pulses, and oilseeds, reducing agricultural diversity.
- Large landholders with better resources can take advantage of MSP, while small and marginal farmers (86% of all farmers) struggle due to lack of access.

Way Forward

- Strengthening the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act
 - Amend state APMC Acts to ensure that no crop is purchased below MSP.
 - Introduce penalties for violations by private traders and agribusiness firms.
 - Strengthen e-NAM (National Agricultural Market) to provide transparent, competitive pricing mechanisms.
- Government Procurement and Price Stabilisation
 - The government must be prepared to procure at least 25% of total crop production under the Price Support Scheme (PSS), particularly during the post-harvest price slump.
 - Establish a Price Stabilisation Revolving Fund (PSRF) in each state, backed by the Centre, to ensure timely procurement.
 - Focus procurement on 21 MSP-covered food crops and key vegetables such as potato, tomato, and onion.
- Revisiting Food Security Policies
 - The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, must be reoriented to include a broader procurement basket.
 - Public Distribution System (PDS) should diversify beyond rice and wheat, integrating pulses, millets, and oilseeds.
 - Leverage procurement to meet nutritional needs in mid-day meal schemes, Anganwadis, and ration shops.
- Post-Harvest Infrastructure and Financing
 - Invest in cold storage, warehouse, and logistics to minimize post-harvest losses.
 - Provide pledge loans to farmers to prevent distress sales after harvest.
 - Expand crop insurance under PM Fasal Bima Yojana to cover price fluctuations.
- Strengthening Market Assurance Schemes
 - The Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) introduced in 2018 attempted to bridge MSP shortfalls through:
 - Price Support Scheme (PSS): Direct procurement at MSP.
 - Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (BBY): Compensation for price differentials.
 - Market Assurance Scheme (MAS): Empowering states to procure when prices crash.
 - However, these schemes have seen poor implementation and need revival to complement MSP legalisation.
- Fiscal Feasibility of Legal MSP
 - A ₹5 lakh crore fund nationwide can sustain MSP at Swaminathan Commission levels.
 - Redirecting subsidies from inefficient schemes could offset much of this cost.

Conclusion

- The ongoing farmers' agitation underscores the need for a structural overhaul of India's agrarian economy.
- A legal MSP is not just about guaranteeing prices—it is about ensuring food security, rural stability, and economic justice.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Impact of Climate Change on Education

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

Introduction:

- A recent UNICEF report on climate change and education has highlighted a severe global crisis, especially in developing nations. The report reveals that millions of students in 85 countries faced school disruptions in 2024 due to extreme climate events such as heat waves, cyclones, storms, floods, and droughts.
- South Asia was the worst affected region, with 128 million students impacted, including 55 million in India
- Other highly impacted regions included East Asia, the Pacific, and Africa, where El Niño-induced floods and droughts severely disrupted education.

Key Findings of the UNICEF Report

- Major Climate Hazards Affecting Education
 - Heat waves emerged as the biggest threat to schools in 2024, with countries like Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Cambodia experiencing extreme temperatures.
 - Multiple hazards affected countries like Afghanistan, where both heat waves and floods caused significant school closures.
 - El Niño's effects in Africa led to a double crisis of floods and droughts, severely impacting school infrastructure.
- Impact on School Infrastructure and Accessibility
 - Extreme climate events damaged school buildings, essential supplies, and facilities.
 - Many students could not reach schools due to destroyed roads and flooded areas.
 - Learning conditions became unsafe, with schools lacking basic climate-resilient infrastructure such as proper ventilation, heat-resistant roofing, and flood defenses.
- Effects on Students' Health and Learning Abilities
 - Rising temperatures affected students' concentration, memory, and cognitive abilities.
 - Increased mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and trauma due to displacement and loss.
 - Physical health risks increased as children are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.
- Social Consequences of School Disruptions
 - Prolonged school closures led to a rise in child labor and child marriages.
 - Gender-based violence increased, as school closures exposed girls to higher risks of abuse.
 - Girls were more affected than boys, as they often faced greater social and economic pressures to drop out of school permanently.

Concerns Raised by the UNICEF Report

- Lack of Government Action and Investment
 - Education systems are largely unprepared to deal with climate change-related disruptions.
 - Governments have not allocated sufficient financial resources to tackle climate risks in schools.
 - No specific national policies exist in most countries to protect students and ensure continuity of education during climate crises.
- Absence of Climate-Resilient Schools
 - Very few schools worldwide have disaster-resilient infrastructure that can withstand extreme climate events.
 - No standardized protocols exist for reopening schools after climate-induced disasters.
 - Lack of adaptation strategies, such as alternative schooling models, digital education access, and temporary learning centers, makes the education sector vulnerable.
- Growing Risks in the Coming Years
 - UNICEF had already warned in previous reports that more children will be exposed to climate crises in the future.
 - The 2024 report provides concrete evidence that the situation is deteriorating, with worse climate-related disruptions expected in the coming years.
 - Governments worldwide are still not taking the issue seriously, despite repeated warnings from experts.

UNICEF's Recommendations for Climate-Resilient Education Systems

- Strengthening Climate-Smart Educational Infrastructure
 - Investment in disaster-resilient school buildings, including:
 - a. Flood-resistant structures
 - b. Heat-resistant classrooms
 - c. Sustainable cooling and ventilation systems
 - Incorporating climate adaptation measures into new school construction projects.
- Integrating Climate Education into School Curriculums
 - Making climate change education mandatory in school curriculums.
 - Training teachers on sustainability, disaster preparedness, and climate resilience strategies.
 - Encouraging student participation in climate action initiatives.
- Developing Alternative Learning Methods
 - Expanding digital learning platforms to ensure access to education during school closures.
 - Creating mobile learning centers and temporary schools in disaster-prone areas.
 - Implementing flexible schooling policies to prevent students from permanently dropping out.
- Increased Financial Investment in Climate-Resilient Education
 - UNICEF urges governments to allocate more funding to improve climate resilience in education systems.
 - Ensuring that climate-related national policies prioritize child education as a key sector.
 - Partnering with international organizations and NGOs to develop better disaster response strategies.

Challenges in Implementing Climate-Resilient Education Policies

- Insufficient Political Will
 - Many governments do not prioritize climate change adaptation in education.
 - Short-term policy focus leads to lack of long-term investment in sustainable education models.
- Limited Financial Resources
 - Developing nations lack the funding to build climate-resilient schools.
 - International financial aid and climate adaptation funds are often insufficient or delayed.
- Difficulty in Predicting Climate Events
 - Climate disasters strike unpredictably, making preparedness planning difficult.
 - Lack of real-time data and monitoring systems for school disruptions.

Conclusion

- The UNICEF report highlights a severe and growing crisis in global education due to climate change.
- The need for bold policies, financial investment, and proactive governance has never been greater. Climate-resilient education should be a global priority, ensuring that every child, regardless of geography, has access to uninterrupted and quality education.

Source : **Anonymous**

EDITORIAL SECTION



Illegal Migration and Deportation of Indians from the United States

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

Introduction:

- The recent deportation of over 100 illegal Indian immigrants from the United States underscores the strict enforcement of immigration laws by the US administration.
- It also highlights the socio-economic conditions in India that drive people to seek better opportunities abroad through risky and illegal means.
- This raises serious concerns about illegal migration networks operating in India.

Factors Driving Illegal Migration from India

- Economic Hardship and Unemployment
 - Many Indians migrate illegally due to lack of economic opportunities, job insecurity, and poor wages in their home country.
 - States such as Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat, which have a history of migration, see many young people opting for risky routes due to rural distress and lack of skilled employment.
- Desire for a Better Standard of Living
 - The perceived higher quality of life, better wages, and social security benefits in the US attract migrants.
 - Many believe they will eventually legalize their status through job sponsorships, asylum claims, or amnesty programs.
- Exploitation by Human Trafficking Networks
 - A well-organized "donkey route" (illegal migration network) facilitates migration through countries such as Mexico, Central America, and Europe.
 - Migrants often pay crores of rupees to traffickers who promise them entry into the US via land or sea routes.
- Lack of Awareness about Legal Migration Pathways
 - Many migrants are unaware of legal visa options, work permits, and study opportunities, leading them to fall prey to illegal agents.
 - The lack of strict background checks and education on the consequences of illegal migration further fuels the problem.

The US Crackdown on Illegal Immigration

The US has long been strict about immigration laws, but under the Trump administration, enforcement became more visible and aggressive. Some key measures include:

- Increased Deportations
 - The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has intensified crackdowns on illegal immigrants, leading to mass deportations.
 - In recent years, thousands of Indians have been forcibly repatriated from detention centers.
- US-India Diplomatic Engagement
 - India's External Affairs Minister has assured the US that India is willing to accept deported nationals after proper verification.
 - India has not adopted a confrontational stance like some Latin American countries but has cooperated with the deportation process.

The Scale of Illegal Indian Immigrants in the US

- Large Population of Undocumented Indians
 - India is one of the top countries with illegal immigrants in the US, with an estimated 7.5 lakh undocumented Indians.
 - Many entered legally on temporary visas but overstayed beyond the permitted period.
- Risk to National Reputation
 - The large number of Indians living illegally in the US damages India's image and affects its credibility in international relations.
 - There is also a humanitarian concern as illegal migrants often face exploitation, detention, and deportation.

Broader Concerns for Higher Education

- Compromising Academic Standards:
 - The removal of PhD and teaching experience requirements for vice-chancellors may dilute academic and administrative standards in higher education.
- Resistance from Stakeholders:
 - Universities, faculty, and state governments have strongly opposed the regulations, citing fears of political interference and loss of institutional independence.
- Potential for Syllabus Overhaul:
 - The Central government has already faced criticism for influencing curriculum changes, and these regulations could extend such control to appointments, further politicizing higher education.

Implications of Mass Deportation for India

- Economic and Social Challenges
 - The returning deportees may struggle to reintegrate into Indian society as they often sell property and belongings before migrating.
 - Deportation also causes financial distress as families lose the money they invested in the illegal migration process.
- Need for Government Action Against Human Trafficking
 - India needs to crack down on illegal migration networks operating in states like Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat.
 - Law enforcement agencies must arrest and prosecute agents involved in human trafficking.
- Impact on Legal Migration
 - Stricter US immigration policies may also affect legal migrants, making it difficult for genuine students and skilled professionals to secure visas.
- Psychological and Social Stigma
 - Many deported individuals face shame and ostracization in their communities, discouraging others from taking similar risks.
 - Awareness campaigns can help educate people on legal migration pathways and the risks associated with illegal entry.

Way Forward

To prevent further illegal migration, a multi-pronged approach is needed:

- Strengthening Border and Immigration Laws
 - The Indian government should increase surveillance on illegal migration routes and strengthen exit controls at airports and border checkpoints.
 - Coordination with foreign governments can help identify and dismantle international trafficking networks.
- Creating Awareness and Education Campaigns
 - Public awareness campaigns should educate youth and families on the dangers of illegal migration.
 - Schools and colleges should promote information on legal opportunities for work and study abroad.
- Promoting Employment Opportunities in India
 - Strengthening Make in India, Skill India, and Startup India initiatives can generate more jobs and reduce the urge to migrate illegally.
 - Investment in rural infrastructure and economic development can help curb migration at the source.
- Diplomatic and Legal Framework
 - India must engage with countries like the US, Canada, and Mexico to create legal migration pathways and prevent human trafficking.
 - Strengthening bilateral agreements can help establish temporary work visa programs to discourage illegal migration.
- Rehabilitation of Deportees
 - The government should create reintegration programs for deported individuals, providing skill training, financial aid, and employment support.

Conclusion

- The recent deportations of illegal Indian immigrants from the US highlight the urgent need to address illegal migration at multiple levels.
- While the US is rightfully enforcing its immigration laws, India must also take responsibility for curbing illegal migration networks and ensuring the welfare of deported individuals.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024

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

Introduction

- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 presents a comprehensive assessment of learning outcomes in Indian schools post-pandemic.
- The latest findings indicate a significant recovery in foundational learning levels, particularly in government schools, which have traditionally lagged behind.
- The report provides crucial insights into the progress and challenges in the Indian education system, crediting the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for some of these improvements.

Understanding ASER and Its Importance

- What is ASER?
 - ASER is a nationwide survey conducted by Pratham NGO that evaluates the learning levels of children in rural India.
 - It assesses basic literacy and numeracy skills among school-going children (ages 6-16).
- Why is ASER important?
 - ASER is India's largest citizen-led educational survey and is crucial for tracking learning outcomes and educational disparities.
 - It provides critical data for policymakers, educators, and researchers to assess the effectiveness of education policies like the NEP 2020.

Role of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- Emphasis on Foundational Learning:
 - The NEP 2020 laid a strong emphasis on early childhood education and foundational literacy/numeracy skills.
 - The improved learning outcomes in Class 3 and 5 align with the objectives of the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat).
- Introduction of Activity-Based Learning:
 - The shift towards experiential learning, competency-based assessments, and teacher training programs has positively influenced student performance.
- Digital Education Reforms:
 - Increased focus on EdTech initiatives like DIKSHA and PM eVidya has improved accessibility and learning opportunities.
- Increased Public Investment in School Education:
 - The Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and PM Poshan Scheme (Mid-Day Meal) have contributed to increased school attendance and retention rates.

Regional Trends and Performance

- Uttar Pradesh – A Notable Improvement:
 - Traditionally a lagging state, Uttar Pradesh has shown impressive progress in all educational indicators.
 - This reflects effective implementation of state-specific education reforms, improved teacher accountability, and better school infrastructure.
- Government Schools Performing Better in Rural Areas:
 - Government schools, particularly in rural India, have seen higher enrollment and improved learning levels, reducing the traditional dominance of private schools.
- Private Schools Yet to Fully Recover:
 - While government schools have progressed, private schools have not yet reached their pre-pandemic learning levels.

Digital Literacy and Access: A New Inclusion in ASER

- Smartphone Ownership and Usage:
 - ASER 2024 included, for the first time, a section on digital literacy among students aged 14-16 years.
 - 85% of boys and 79% of girls reported knowing how to use a smartphone, indicating growing digital access.
- Awareness of Online Safety:
 - A significant number of students understand online safety measures, showing an improvement in digital literacy awareness.
- Persistent Digital Divide:
 - While access has improved, rural-urban disparities remain in terms of quality of digital education, internet access, and device availability.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- Persistent Learning Gaps
 - Over 50% of Class 5 students struggle to read a Class 2-level text, indicating a need for stronger interventions at the primary level.
 - Numeracy skills among secondary students remain below desired levels, affecting overall competency in mathematics and science.
- Need for Strengthening Secondary Education
 - While primary education has seen improvements, secondary education (Class 8-12) has not recovered fully.
 - There is a high dropout rate in secondary education, particularly among girls and students from marginalized backgrounds.
- Teacher Training and Pedagogical Reforms
 - Need for sustained teacher training programs to ensure competency-based learning approaches.
 - The Student-Teacher Ratio (STR) in government schools needs further improvement, especially in rural and tribal areas.
- Rural-Urban and Gender Disparities
 - Girls in rural areas have lower access to digital education tools, creating a gendered digital divide.
 - Geographical disparities remain a concern, with some states and districts still lagging behind national averages.

Way Forward

- Strengthening Foundational Learning
 - Expanding the NIPUN Bharat Mission to ensure universal foundational literacy and numeracy by Class 3.
 - Remedial learning programs for children who have fallen behind in literacy and numeracy skills.
- Bridging the Digital Divide
 - Expanding digital infrastructure in rural schools, ensuring access to affordable internet and smart classrooms.
 - More emphasis on digital literacy education, including cyber safety awareness and responsible technology usage.
- Enhancing Teacher Training
 - Competency-based training for teachers to help them adapt to new pedagogical methods.
 - Strengthening the B.Ed. and in-service teacher training programs to ensure quality education delivery.
- Improving Secondary and Vocational Education
 - Strengthening Skill Development Programs and integrating vocational training with mainstream education.
 - Expanding scholarship and financial aid programs to prevent secondary-level dropouts.

Conclusion

- The ASER 2024 report presents an optimistic picture of India's school education recovery post-COVID-19.
- Learning outcomes in foundational education have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, but secondary education and overall literacy levels still need major improvements.
- The rise in digital literacy among children is a positive trend, but the digital divide persists and requires greater policy attention.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Manual Scavenging in India

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

Introduction

- Despite repeated bans, judicial directives, and legislative measures, manual scavenging remains a grim reality in India.
- Recently, the Supreme Court once again criticised the central and state governments for their failure to eliminate this inhuman practice.

Legislative Provisions Banning Manual Scavenging

- The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993
 - First attempt to ban manual scavenging and dry latrines.
 - Weak enforcement led to the continuation of the practice.
- The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013
 - Comprehensive law criminalizing manual scavenging.
 - Mandates rehabilitation, alternative employment, and protective equipment.
 - Penalty of ₹5 lakh and imprisonment for violators.
- Supreme Court Directives (2014, 2023, 2024)
 - 2014: SC declared manual scavenging a violation of fundamental rights under Article 21 (Right to Life).
 - 2023: Ordered an immediate halt and directed compensation of ₹30 lakh per death.
 - 2024: Criticized non-compliance and demanded accountability from city commissioners.

Recent Deaths Expose Official Negligence

- February 2024 – Three deaths in Kolkata:
 - Three manual scavengers died inside a sewer while working without protective gear.
 - Highlights lack of mechanization and failure to implement Supreme Court orders.
- January 2024 – Two deaths in Bengaluru:
 - A father and son died while cleaning a drain, without any safety measures.
 - BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) denies manual scavenging exists but employs thousands informally.
- December 2023 – Tamil Nadu tragedy:
 - Two men suffocated to death inside a sewer in Chennai, due to exposure to toxic gases.
- 2023 Data:
 - Over 80 manual scavengers died in India, despite legal prohibitions.
 - Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra reported the highest number of deaths.

Government's Apathy and Policy Failure

- Centre shifts responsibility to states citing sanitation as a state subject.
- State governments misuse legal loopholes, claiming that manual scavenging does not exist.
- Bureaucratic inefficiency in implementing rehabilitation programs.
- Failure to provide protective equipment and mechanized alternatives, making workers vulnerable to hazardous conditions.

Grim Reality of Manual Scavenging in India

- Engaged by marginalized SC communities, reinforcing caste-based discrimination.
- 40% of districts in India still report manual scavenging activities.
- 75–80 deaths annually since 2019 due to toxic gas inhalation and accidents.

Loopholes in Law and Enforcement

- Distinction between "manual scavenging" and "hazardous cleaning":
 - States exploit this to claim that manual scavenging no longer exists.
 - Example: Workers forced to clean sewers manually, but labeled under "hazardous cleaning" to escape legal scrutiny.
- Failure to implement mechanization:
 - The Court directed the use of machines and protective gear, but these remain absent.
- Compensation violations:
 - The Court mandated ₹30 lakh compensation per death, yet payments are rare.

Rehabilitation: A Broken Promise

- Lack of skill development and employment alternatives for affected workers.
- Government schemes remain underfunded and poorly executed.
- Families of deceased workers struggle without financial security.

International Best Practices for Eliminating Manual Scavenging

- United Kingdom: Strict Legal Enforcement and Technological Innovation
 - Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 – Legally mandates that no worker should enter confined spaces without protective equipment and safety protocols.
 - Strict Penalties for Non-Compliance – Any employer forcing workers into unsafe conditions faces heavy fines and imprisonment.
- United States: Advanced Occupational Safety and Workers' Rights
 - Automated Sewer Maintenance Systems – Use of CCTV sewer inspection technology and self-cleaning pipelines minimizes human entry.
 - Government-Funded Worker Training – The U.S. Department of Labor mandates periodic skill training for sewer maintenance workers.
- Japan: Smart Sewer Systems and Urban Planning for Sanitation Safety
 - Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plants – Waste is processed through high-tech filtration plants, eliminating the need for manual handling.
 - City-Wide Adoption of AI in Waste Management – AI predicts blockages and maintenance needs, preventing emergency manual cleaning situations.
- Singapore: High-Tech Waste Management and Zero Manual Handling
 - Pneumatic Waste Disposal System – Underground vacuum pipes transport waste, reducing manual cleaning.
 - Sanitation as a Respected Profession – Workers are highly paid and recognized for their essential contribution.

Way Forward

- Strict Law Enforcement and Accountability
 - Criminal prosecution of officials allowing manual scavenging.
 - Independent monitoring mechanisms to prevent false affidavits and manipulated data.
 - Empowering National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) with enforcement powers.
- Mandatory Mechanization of Sewer Cleaning
 - Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) must be penalized if mechanization is not adopted.
 - Increased budget allocation for robotic cleaners and smart sewerage management.
 - Strict regulations on private contractors employing manual scavengers illegally.
- Financial and Social Rehabilitation
 - Timely disbursement of compensation to victims' families.
 - Guaranteed alternative employment, educational scholarships, and skill development.
 - Social awareness campaigns to end caste-based occupational stigma.
- Active Judiciary Oversight and Policy Reform
 - Supreme Court must monitor state compliance through independent committees.
 - Incentivizing best-performing states in manual scavenging eradication.
 - Regular audits of municipalities to ensure mechanization is implemented.

Conclusion:

- The continuation of manual scavenging in India despite legal bans and judicial intervention reflects systemic failures and social injustice.
- Unless governments act decisively, this inhuman practice will persist, leading to more deaths and continued violations of fundamental rights. The real test lies in political will, administrative commitment, and public accountability.

Source : **Anonymous**

EDITORIAL SECTION



Easing Banking Regulations in India

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

Introduction

- India's GDP is projected to grow from \$3.7 trillion (2023-24) to \$7 trillion (2030-31), backed by strong fiscal policies, robust digital and physical infrastructure, and financial sector expansion.
- However, to sustain this growth, higher capital expenditure (capex) and increased credit flow are essential.
- The current regulatory framework for banks, including Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), and Priority Sector Lending (PSL), restricts credit availability, making a case for easing banking regulations.

The Need for Increased Investments

- Capital Requirement for a \$7 Trillion Economy
 - To achieve a \$7 trillion economy, India needs \$2.5 trillion in investments, requiring an investment-to-GDP ratio of 34%.
 - The government's fiscal deficit limits public investment, making private and household savings crucial for capital formation.
 - Private sector investment has declined, with the investment-to-operating cash flow ratio falling from 114% (2008-09) to 56% (2023-24).

Challenges in Financial Intermediation

- The Declining Role of Banks in Capital Mobilization
 - Banks now receive only 40% of household savings, down from 50% a few years ago, as consumers prefer mutual funds and pension schemes for better returns.
 - High pre-emptions reduce banks' lendable resources, pushing up interest rates and discouraging corporate and MSME borrowing.
- The Burden of Regulatory Pre-emptions
 - Banks must hold up to 30% of deposits as non-lendable reserves due to:
 - SLR (26%) – Higher than the regulatory requirement of 18%, due to LCR constraints.
 - CRR (4%) – No interest earned, further limiting bank liquidity.
 - This reduces credit supply and increases borrowing costs, slowing economic expansion.
- Impact of New LCR Guidelines for Digital Deposits
 - Upcoming LCR norms for digital deposits will require banks to invest an additional 2-2.5% of deposits in liquid assets, reducing lending capacity further.

Rethinking Banking Regulations: Do We Need Both LCR and SLR?

- Global Best Practices vs. India's Approach
- Globally, only LCR is mandatory, while India imposes both LCR and SLR, leading to excessive capital retention in low-yield assets.
- In most countries, CRR (which earns no interest) is included in High-Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA), but India excludes it, reducing bank profitability.
- Basel III norms recommend that banks assess their liquidity needs independently, yet RBI's rigid regulations create compliance burdens.

Addressing Liquidity Challenges

- Limited Access to Credit for MSMEs
- Large corporates access capital through equity markets, bond markets, and bank credit, but MSMEs face credit shortages.
- Priority Sector Lending (PSL) targets exceed 60%, leading to mispricing of credit risks.
- The PSL framework must evolve to reflect new economic priorities and current GDP composition.

Credit Growth and Exchange Rate Management

- Credit Growth Lower than Nominal GDP Growth
 - India's credit growth lags nominal GDP growth, raising concerns about capital formation and financial stability.
 - The credit-to-deposit (CD) ratio must be re-evaluated, ensuring banks can raise debt and equity efficiently.
- Exchange Rate Management and Liquidity Impact
 - Defending the rupee against the strong dollar drains liquidity without stabilizing the currency in real terms.
 - Overvaluation of the rupee reduces export competitiveness, impacting trade balance and forex reserves.

Way Forward

- Revisiting SLR and LCR mandates to free up bank liquidity and lower lending costs.
- Encouraging private-sector investment through policy stability and demand stimulation.
- Updating PSL norms to reflect India's evolving economic structure.
- Ensuring credit growth aligns with nominal GDP growth to sustain investment-led expansion.
- Deepening capital markets and reducing regulatory barriers for bond market growth.
- Aligning digital banking costs with international fee models to maintain financial viability.

Conclusion

- India stands at a critical juncture in its financial evolution. With progressive banking reforms, better financial intermediation, and improved liquidity management, the banking sector can drive India's transformation into a \$7 trillion economy.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



Agroforestry in India

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

Introduction

- Agroforestry is a sustainable land management system that integrates trees and shrubs with agricultural crops, offering environmental, economic, and social benefits.
- In India, agroforestry covers 28.4 million hectares, which is 8.65% of the country's total land area.
- It plays a crucial role in carbon sequestration, accounting for 19.3% of India's carbon stocks, making it an essential tool in climate change mitigation.

Carbon Sequestration Potential of Agroforestry

- Research suggests that with adequate policy and financial backing, agroforestry can sequester over 2.5 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent by 2030.
- Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR) projects integrated with agroforestry serve as effective carbon sinks, enhancing land restoration and climate resilience.

Challenges: The "Common Practice" Criterion in Carbon Finance

- Carbon finance mechanisms rely on the "common practice" criterion, which assesses whether an activity provides additional environmental benefits beyond what is already common.
- Global standards such as Verra's Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Gold Standard are designed based on large-scale, contiguous farmlands, common in the U.S. and Latin America.
- India's agricultural landscape differs significantly, with 86.1% of farmers classified as small and marginal, each holding less than two hectares of land.
- Current carbon credit mechanisms often exclude Indian farmers from benefiting because their scattered agroforestry practices are deemed "common", preventing them from accessing carbon finance.

Need for India-Specific Carbon Finance Approaches

- Redefining "Common Practice": India needs customized criteria that acknowledge its fragmented landholding patterns.
- Unlocking Agroforestry's Potential: Adjusting carbon finance standards could make millions of small farmers eligible for carbon credits, increasing participation in ARR projects.
- Economic Benefits for Farmers: Revised standards would allow smallholder farmers to monetize carbon sequestration, generating additional income while supporting India's climate goals.

Economic and Environmental Benefits of Agroforestry & ARR Initiatives

- Income Diversification:
 - Agroforestry enhances financial stability for farmers by providing additional revenue from carbon credits, reducing dependence on unpredictable crop yields and monsoons.
- Environmental Sustainability:
 - ARR projects restore degraded lands, improve soil fertility, and enhance water retention, ensuring long-term agricultural productivity.
- Boost to Rural Economy:
 - Better land management practices and access to carbon finance can significantly raise incomes for small farmers, strengthening rural economies.

Challenges Hindering Agroforestry Expansion

- Limited Awareness: Many farmers, especially smallholders, lack knowledge about agroforestry's economic and environmental benefits.
- High Initial Costs: The upfront investment for tree planting, fencing, and maintenance discourages widespread adoption.
- Land Availability: Farmers often prioritize food crops over agroforestry, limiting tree cultivation on agricultural lands.
- Water Scarcity: Trees in agroforestry systems may compete with crops for water, potentially affecting yields in drought-prone areas.
- Climate Vulnerability: Agroforestry remains susceptible to extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and storms, which can damage both trees and crops.

Policy and Institutional Support for Agroforestry

- Proven Success of ARR Projects in India:
 - Institutes like The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) have implemented 19 projects across seven states, benefiting over 56,600 farmers.
- Scaling Up Agroforestry Initiatives:
 - International carbon finance platforms must revise their criteria to accommodate India's agricultural realities.
- Government's Role:
 - Policies, financial incentives, and capacity-building programs are essential to encourage the adoption of agroforestry.

Reforming Global Carbon Finance Standards for India

- Recognizing India's Unique Farming Landscape:
 - Standards like Verra and Gold Standard must revise their methodologies to reflect India's smallholder-dominated farming system.
- Inclusive Carbon Finance Mechanisms:
 - Updating "common practice" definitions will enable millions of small farmers to access carbon markets, fostering economic growth and climate resilience.

Way Forward

- Enhancing Economic and Environmental Resilience:
 - Integrating agroforestry with carbon finance mechanisms is key to addressing India's agricultural and environmental challenges.
- Empowering Farmers with Carbon Finance Access:
 - Smallholder farmers should be encouraged to participate in carbon credit programs, boosting rural incomes while supporting climate action.
- Farmer Training and Awareness Programs:
 - The government should launch targeted training programs on best agroforestry practices, tree-crop compatibility, and sustainable land management.
- Financial Support and Subsidies:
 - Expand financial schemes such as subsidies and low-interest loans to cover the costs of saplings, fencing, and initial agroforestry investments.
- Global Leadership in Agroforestry:
 - India can lead the world in sustainable agroforestry models by developing innovative policies and carbon finance mechanisms, making a significant contribution to global carbon sequestration efforts.

Conclusion

- To realize the full potential of agroforestry, India must adopt a comprehensive strategy involving:
 - Farmer awareness programs
 - Financial and policy support
 - Strong market linkages
- Integration with carbon finance opportunities
- These initiatives will help India address climate change, rural poverty, and environmental degradation, while advancing sustainability and economic growth.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



India's Pension System

General Studies-2; Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Introduction:

- India's pension system has evolved over the years, reflecting changes in government priorities, economic policies, and social security frameworks.
- Three key pension schemes have defined these transitions, each representing a different balance between government-backed financial security and market-driven risk-sharing mechanisms.

Evolution of Pension Schemes in India

- Old Pension Scheme (OPS)
 - Pre-2004 defined-benefit system ensuring retirees received a fixed pension based on their last drawn salary.
 - State-funded pension model, which eliminated market risks for retirees.
 - Fiscal burden on the government made it unsustainable in the long run, leading to policy shifts.
- New Pension Scheme (NPS)
 - Introduced in 2004, replacing the defined-benefit system with a defined-contribution model.
 - Market-linked pension payouts, where contributions from employees and the government are invested in financial markets.
 - Exposure to market risks, making retirement income uncertain, particularly during economic downturns.
 - Criticized as a neoliberal reform, reducing state responsibility and shifting financial risks to individuals.
- Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)
 - Proposed as a hybrid model, combining aspects of both OPS and NPS.
 - Aims to provide a middle ground, ensuring some level of state-backed financial security while allowing market participation.
 - Concerns over limited benefits, as returns remain lower than OPS, and some market exposure persists.
 - Eligibility requires 25 years of service, which disadvantages late entrants and raises issues of fairness and inclusivity.

Retreat of Neoliberalism and the Shift Towards Welfarism

- Global Trends: The 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a reconsideration of neoliberal policies, with many nations reinforcing social security measures.
- India's Changing Approach: A growing demand to revert to welfare-driven policies like OPS highlights public expectations for state intervention in financial security.

Challenges and Areas for Reform in UPS

- Strengthening State Intervention
 - UPS should incorporate a minimum guaranteed pension to protect retirees from market volatility, similar to OPS.
- Increasing Government Contributions
 - The current hybrid model does not fully mitigate market risks; higher state contributions could ensure financial stability for retirees.
- Expanding Coverage to Informal Sector Workers
 - UPS currently benefits only Union government employees, excluding large groups like teachers and informal workers.
 - Wider pension coverage is necessary for true social security.
- Addressing the Future of Pay Commissions
 - UPS might discourage future Pay Commissions, which have historically helped revise salaries and pension benefits for government employees.
 - The risk of salary stagnation could impact financial well-being in the long term.
- Managing Structural and Administrative Complexity
 - A hybrid pension model requires significant administrative coordination, which could lead to inefficiencies and delays.
 - Regulatory challenges must be addressed to ensure seamless implementation.
- Political and Fiscal Challenges
 - Implementing UPS at a large scale involves significant financial planning.
 - Budget constraints and economic downturns could affect the feasibility of UPS.

Balancing Welfare and Market Participation

- Comparing OPS, NPS, and UPS
 - OPS ensured security but was financially unsustainable.
 - NPS exposed retirees to market risks and reduced state responsibility.
 - UPS attempts to strike a balance between the two but still faces challenges.
- A Window for Reform
 - The global shift away from neoliberalism provides an opportunity to rethink pension strategies.
 - A well-structured UPS could offer retirees financial stability while allowing partial market participation.
- Ensuring Sustainable Financial Security
 - A properly designed UPS must protect retirees from market risks, ensure consistent payouts, and prevent fund depletion over time.

International Best Practices in Pension Systems

- Sweden:
 - Guaranteed minimum pension regardless of market performance.
 - Combines state contributions and individual savings while ensuring financial security.
- United Kingdom (UK):
 - National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) provides universal pension coverage through automatic enrollment of eligible workers.
- Netherlands:
 - Known for strong regulatory oversight of pension funds, ensuring sustainable payouts and financial security.
- Singapore:
 - Central Provident Fund (CPF) offers tax incentives for voluntary savings, reducing state pension burdens while encouraging retirement savings.

Way Forward

- Introduction of a Minimum Guaranteed Pension
 - Ensuring stable income for retirees, especially during economic crises.
 - Reducing dependence on market-driven returns.
- Inclusion of Informal Sector Workers
 - Broadening UPS to cover workers outside government employment.
 - Enhancing financial security for a larger population.
- Flexible Tenure Requirements
 - Restructuring the 25-year service rule to progressively reward employees based on years served.
 - Accommodating late workforce entrants and career interruptions.
- Establishing a Strong Regulatory Framework
 - Creating an independent Pension Regulatory Authority to oversee fund management and ensure transparency.
- Enhancing Financial Awareness and Advisory Support
 - Providing financial literacy programs to help employees make informed pension decisions.

Conclusion

- A restructured UPS could strike a balance between state-backed financial security and market-driven returns.
- India's shift towards welfarism provides an opportunity to refine its pension system for long-term sustainability and retiree well-being.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



India-Bangladesh Relations

General Studies-2; Topic: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Introduction

- The bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh has reached a crucial phase following the student-led mass uprising in July-August 2024, which led to the ouster of the Awami League government.
- The rise of an interim government has introduced new dynamics in diplomatic relations. It remains imperative for both nations to focus on shared interests, historical ties, and future collaboration.

Historical and Strategic Importance of India-Bangladesh Relations

- Shared History and Strong Foundations
 - India played a pivotal role in the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, providing military, political, and humanitarian support.
 - The two nations share a 4,096-km-long border, making it India's longest land border with any country.
 - The relationship has been shaped by mutual cooperation in areas such as trade, connectivity, security, and energy.
- Economic and Trade Linkages
 - India is Bangladesh's second-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade crossing \$16 billion in 2022-23.
 - Bangladesh exports garments, pharmaceuticals, and jute products to India, while India supplies essentials like cotton, machinery, and petroleum.
 - Bangladesh is India's largest development partner, receiving a significant portion of Indian Lines of Credit (LoC).
- People-to-People and Cultural Ties
 - The two nations share deep linguistic and cultural connections, particularly in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya.
 - Cross-border railway and bus services enhance people-to-people ties.
 - Bengali as a shared language fosters close socio-cultural relations.

Current Diplomatic Developments and Challenges

- Political Shift in Bangladesh and Its Implications
 - The fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government marks a significant political transformation.
 - The new interim government has expressed commitment to maintaining a positive relationship with India.
 - India's lack of anticipation of this political transition may have led to miscalculations in its diplomatic approach.
- Concerns Over Minority Rights and Communal Harmony
 - Reports of violence against Hindus and political opponents post-August 2024 created concerns in India.
 - The Bangladeshi interim government has taken steps to curb violence, ensuring protection for all communities.
- Border Security and Cross-Border Issues
 - The issue of border killings continues to strain relations.
 - Smuggling, illegal migration, and human trafficking remain contentious issues.
 - Both sides need greater diplomatic engagement to resolve these disputes amicably.

Economic Cooperation and Development Prospects

- Expanding Regional Connectivity
 - India and Bangladesh have successfully revived multiple railway links, improving regional trade and transit.
 - The India-Bangladesh-Nepal trilateral hydroelectricity agreement is a promising step toward regional energy security.
 - Strengthening initiatives like BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal) connectivity can enhance economic growth.
- Energy and Water Sharing Agreements
 - Bangladesh seeks greater access to Indian electricity grids and cooperation on renewable energy projects.
 - The Farakka Barrage and Teesta River water-sharing issues remain unresolved, causing friction.
 - Pragmatic negotiations are needed to ensure equitable distribution of river waters and avoid diplomatic tensions.

Geopolitical Dimensions and Regional Cooperation

- SAARC and Regional Integration Efforts
 - The interim government has made attempts to revive the SAARC platform, dormant for more than a decade.
 - Engaging with SAARC could enhance South Asian cooperation.
- China's Expanding Influence in Bangladesh
 - China has increased its presence in Bangladesh through infrastructure projects, defense cooperation, and economic investments.
 - Bangladesh's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) raises concerns for India regarding debt dependency and strategic influence.
 - India must counterbalance China's influence by offering sustainable economic partnerships.
- Maritime Cooperation in the Indian Ocean
 - Bangladesh's growing maritime capabilities and interests in the Bay of Bengal align with India's Indo-Pacific strategy.
 - Joint naval exercises and maritime security partnerships could enhance regional stability.
 - India and Bangladesh could collaborate in blue economy initiatives, including sustainable fishing and deep-sea exploration.

Way Forward

- Diplomatic Reset and Mutual Trust
 - India's Foreign Secretary's December 2024 visit to Dhaka was a step in the right direction.
 - New Delhi should engage proactively with Bangladesh's interim government to ensure continuity in bilateral cooperation.
 - A structured diplomatic framework should be developed to address misunderstandings and reduce tensions.
- Addressing Misinformation and Enhancing Media Cooperation
 - The interim Bangladeshi government has invited Indian journalists for on-ground reporting to counter misinformation.
 - Establishing a joint media monitoring and fact-checking mechanism could help reduce misperceptions in both countries.
 - Strengthening cultural exchanges and academic collaborations can promote mutual understanding.
- Enhancing Security and Defense Cooperation
 - India and Bangladesh need to strengthen border management mechanisms to prevent illegal activities while ensuring humane treatment of border residents.
 - Expanding counterterrorism cooperation will be crucial to maintaining regional security.
 - Bangladesh could benefit from India's defense technology and training programs.
- Building a New Era of Economic and Trade Partnerships
 - Bilateral trade barriers should be reduced, and a Bangladesh-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) could be explored.
 - Special economic zones (SEZs) could be developed for Bangladeshi industries within India, enhancing economic integration.
- Multilateral Engagement
 - India and Bangladesh must coordinate more effectively in global forums like the UN, WTO, and G20 to advance common interests.

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



The Role of Youth in Indian Politics

General Studies-2; Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Introduction

- Youth participation in politics is not just an aspiration but an essential requirement for a progressive and inclusive democracy.
- However, political participation among youth remains limited, with traditional power structures often marginalizing their voices.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent call to invite one lakh young individuals without political backgrounds into politics marks a transformational shift toward youth empowerment, inclusivity, and decentralization.

The Need for Youth Participation in Politics

- Fresh Perspectives and Innovation
 - Traditional political leadership in India has been dominated by seasoned leaders with vast experience. While their wisdom is invaluable, they often operate within conventional frameworks, which may not be equipped to handle modern challenges.
 - Young leaders bring innovative solutions, technological expertise, and modern governance models, enabling dynamic and data-driven policymaking.
- Addressing India's Socio-Economic Challenges
 - Climate Change: Young leaders can advocate for green policies, renewable energy initiatives, and climate adaptation measures to ensure a sustainable future.
 - Education & Employment: Youth-driven governance can prioritize quality education, skill development, and entrepreneurship to tackle unemployment and underemployment.
 - Digital Revolution: Youth engagement can help India leverage artificial intelligence, automation, and blockchain for transparent and efficient governance.
- Strengthening Democratic Institutions
 - Young people can revive democratic values, enhance accountability, and curb political corruption by leveraging social media and citizen engagement platforms.
 - A politically aware and active youth population ensures that democracy remains vibrant and responsive to public needs.

Challenges to Youth Participation in Politics

- Political Dynasties and Elitism
 - Indian politics has historically been dominated by dynastic families, where opportunities for grassroots and merit-based leadership remain limited.
 - Many young aspirants struggle to gain access to political platforms without familial or financial backing.
- Lack of Mentorship and Political Training
 - While enthusiasm is high, youth often lack formal training in governance, policy analysis, and political administration.
 - Existing political parties provide limited mentorship, leaving young leaders to navigate the system without proper guidance.
- Financial and Electoral Barriers
 - Contesting elections requires substantial financial resources, making it difficult for first-generation politicians to compete with established leaders.
 - Criminalization of politics, coupled with money and muscle power, often discourages educated youth from entering public service.
- Tokenism vs. Real Participation
 - Many political parties include youth leaders for symbolic representation, without giving them decision-making authority.
 - This superficial inclusion does little to change governance structures or empower young politicians.

A Vision for India's Future

- A Socially Inclusive India
 - Young leaders must prioritize policies promoting education, healthcare, and equitable economic growth.
 - Social issues like gender equality, caste discrimination, and unemployment must be tackled with progressive policies and grassroots engagement.
- Sustainable Development & Climate Leadership
 - Youth leadership can advance sustainable agriculture, renewable energy projects, and eco-friendly urban planning.
 - Programs like Clean India (Swachh Bharat) and Green India need stronger youth-driven implementation strategies.

- Transforming India into a Global Technological Hub
 - Initiatives like Digital India, Start-up India, and Skill India must be scaled up to equip the next generation with cutting-edge skills.
 - Investment in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and robotics will be crucial for India's global leadership.
- Strengthening Democratic Accountability
 - Youth activism and civic engagement must counter democratic erosion by ensuring transparent, accountable, and people-centric governance.
 - Strengthening Right to Information (RTI) laws and participatory governance models can deepen democracy.

Way Forward

- Meritocracy and Transparent Political Inclusion
 - Political parties must prioritize merit over patronage, selecting candidates based on vision, competency, and leadership potential.
 - Internal democracy within parties must be strengthened to allow youth leaders to rise based on performance rather than family connections.
- Political and Governance Training Programs
 - Establish formal mentorship programs where senior leaders train and guide young politicians in legislative processes, policymaking, and governance.
 - Universities and institutions can introduce "Political Leadership & Governance" courses to equip youth with practical knowledge of administration and lawmaking.
- Electoral Reforms and Financial Support
 - State funding for elections can help level the playing field, allowing youth to contest elections without financial constraints.
 - Stringent laws against political criminalization must be enforced to create a fair and corruption-free environment.
- Civil Society & Media as Catalysts for Change
 - Civil society organizations should actively engage in voter education and capacity-building programs for young politicians.
 - Media must highlight youth success stories in governance to inspire wider participation.
- Quotas & Representation in Political Frameworks
 - Introducing a minimum youth representation quota in political parties and governance structures can institutionalize youth participation.
 - Leadership opportunities such as youth parliaments, advisory councils, and internships in ministries should be expanded.

Conclusion

India stands at a pivotal moment in history, where decisions made today will shape the nation's trajectory for decades to come.

The words of Swami Vivekananda remain ever-relevant: **"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."**

The future of Bharat as a beacon of democracy, innovation, and inclusivity depends on the collective will of its youth. Let us envision a Bharat where youth lead the charge toward a brighter future—where politics is not a profession but a mission, and where governance is driven by purpose, vision, and integrity.

Source : Anonymous

EDITORIAL SECTION



The United States Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement

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

Introduction

- The withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement under President Donald Trump marks a major setback in global efforts to combat climate change.
- As the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and the biggest historical contributor to climate change, the US plays a critical role in international climate action.
- The decision, combined with other policy reversals, has profound environmental, diplomatic, and economic consequences.

The Paris Climate Agreement: Objectives and US Commitments

- The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), aims to:
 - Limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with an ambition of 1.5°C.
 - Strengthen the ability of countries to deal with climate change impacts.
 - Provide financial and technological support to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation.
- The US, under President Barack Obama, had pledged to:
 - Reduce GHG emissions by 26–28% below 2005 levels by 2025.
 - Contribute \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to assist developing nations in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Trump's Decision to Withdraw: Reasons and Justifications

- Economic Concerns:
 - Trump argued that the Paris Agreement was unfair to the US, as it imposed economic burdens while allowing countries like China and India to continue using fossil fuels.
 - Claimed that compliance with the agreement would lead to job losses in the US, particularly in coal and fossil fuel industries.
- National Sovereignty:
 - Trump framed the withdrawal as protecting US sovereignty, stating that the agreement undermined America's ability to determine its own energy policies.

Global Impact of the US Withdrawal

- Undermining Global Climate Action:
 - The US withdrawal weakened collective action and set a dangerous precedent for other nations.
 - It placed additional pressure on countries like the EU, China, and India to lead global climate efforts.
- Increased Emissions & Fossil Fuel Expansion:
 - Trump's policies promoted oil drilling in the Arctic, increased coal production, and weakened vehicle emission standards.
 - The rescinding of the Biden-era target for 50% electric vehicle sales by 2030 further cemented US dependence on fossil fuels.
- Financial Disruptions to Climate Funds:
 - The US had committed \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) but Trump withheld \$2 billion, impacting climate mitigation projects in developing nations.

Reactions from Other Countries and Organizations

- The Global Community:
 - European Union (EU): Strongly criticized the move and pledged to intensify climate action.
 - China and India: Expressed disappointment but reaffirmed their commitments to climate targets.
 - United Nations (UNFCCC): Called the withdrawal regrettable but reaffirmed support for global climate action.
- US States and Cities:
 - Many states, including California, New York, and Washington, formed the We Are Still In coalition, pledging to uphold Paris Agreement commitments.
 - Over 2,700 businesses, cities, and institutions in the US announced independent climate initiatives.

Biden's Reinstatement and Policy Reversals

- Rejoining the Paris Agreement:
 - After assuming office, President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Day 1 (January 2021) to rejoin the Paris Agreement.
- Stronger Climate Commitments:
 - Introduced the Clean Energy Plan, aiming for a net-zero emissions economy by 2050.
 - Announced \$2 trillion for clean energy investments, including incentives for electric vehicles and renewable energy.
- Restored US Leadership in Climate Negotiations:
 - The US played an active role in COP26 (2021) and COP27 (2022).
 - Announced stricter methane regulations and commitments to phasing out coal.

Trump's Second Exit: Implications for Climate Diplomacy

- Weakening of Climate Negotiations:
 - The US withdrawal under Trump for a second time significantly impacts upcoming climate summits.
 - Countries are expected to announce stricter emission reduction targets, and the absence of the US weakens diplomatic momentum.
- Impact on Developing Nations:
 - The withdrawal affects climate finance mechanisms, delaying essential adaptation and mitigation projects in the Global South.
- Long-term Policy Uncertainty:
 - Frequent shifts in US climate policy (Obama-Trump-Biden-Trump) create global uncertainty, undermining long-term climate agreements.
 - If a future administration reverses Biden's climate commitments again, it could derail decades of progress.

The Future of Climate Action Without the US

- Strengthened Role of Other Major Powers:
 - The European Union (EU) and China may lead global climate efforts, filling the void left by the US.
 - India's leadership in solar energy (International Solar Alliance) and Brazil's renewed commitments under President Lula da Silva may help stabilize negotiations.
- Greater Emphasis on Private Sector Initiatives:
 - Many global corporations, financial institutions, and non-state actors are increasing their investment in renewable energy.
- International Pressure on the US:
 - Countries may impose carbon border taxes or trade restrictions on US goods if its policies fail to meet climate standards.

Way Forward

- Strengthening International Agreements:
 - Ensure Paris Agreement commitments are legally binding to prevent future withdrawals.
- Enhancing Climate Finance Mechanisms:
 - Developed countries, including the US, must fulfill their \$100 billion climate finance commitments.
- Encouraging Green Technologies & Renewables:
 - Promote solar, wind, and hydrogen energy as viable alternatives to fossil fuels.
- Holding Countries Accountable:
 - Introduce carbon pricing, carbon border taxes, and trade restrictions on non-compliant nations.
- Promoting Non-Governmental Climate Action:
 - Encourage corporate sector involvement in climate sustainability and net-zero initiatives.

Conclusion

- The US must recognize its global responsibility in the climate crisis. As one of the biggest contributors to global warming, it must lead by example rather than withdraw from collective efforts.
- The world cannot afford another reversal in US climate policy. Climate action is not just an economic decision—it is a moral imperative for future generations.

Source : Anonymous



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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**

