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Supreme Court clarifies the interpretation of Article 30 and its implications for minority institutions in India

Source: The post Supreme Court clarifies the interpretation of Article 30 and its implications for minority institutions in India has been created, based on the article “**Universities are different from religious institutions**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 16th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2-Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context: The article discusses the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) case, focusing on a 2024 Supreme Court judgment. It overrules the 1967 *Azeez Basha* case, clarifying AMU's status as a minority institution. The article highlights different judicial views and the evolving interpretation of Article 30.

For detailed information on **Minority Institutions in India- Determination Criteria, Benefits and Challenges** [read this article here](#)

What is the Background of the AMU Case?

1. Foundation of AMU: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded the M.A.O. College in 1877, which later became the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). It was seen as a key effort in Muslim education post-1857.

2. Controversy on Minority Status: In 1967, the Supreme Court in *S. Azeez Basha* declared that AMU was neither established nor administered by Muslims. The university was not heard during the judgment.

3. Role of M.A.O. College: AMU inherited all debts, rights, and privileges of M.A.O. College, recognized as a minority institution. Historical evidence, such as the 1912 letter from Harcourt Butler, confirmed that ₹30 lakh was raised to establish AMU.

What Was the Supreme Court's Decision in AMU judgment 2024?

1. The Supreme Court overruled the **1967 *S. Azeez Basha* judgment**, recognizing Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) as a minority institution.

2. A seven-judge Supreme Court Bench, in a 4-3 majority, introduced a “**holistic and realistic**” test to assess an institution’s minority status, leaving AMU's case to a smaller Bench.

3. The court emphasized a broad interpretation of Article 30, extending protection to pre-constitutional-era institutions like AMU.

4. The judgment rejected arguments that governmental control or governance structures negate minority status, supporting AMU's historical and legal continuity with M.A.O. College.

5. The court affirmed that the right to administer is a consequence of establishment, ensuring AMU's place as a minority institution of national importance.

What are the other important cases related to the interpretation of Article 30?

1. T.M.A. Pai Foundation Case (2002)

- The 11-judge Bench clarified the administrative rights of minority institutions under Article 30.
- It identified rights such as selecting students, fixing fees, choosing governing bodies, and disciplining employees.

- The case limited governmental interference while ensuring educational standards.

2. Xaviers Case (1974)

- This case highlighted the importance of “choice” in the establishment and administration of minority institutions under Article 30.
- Justice M.H. Beg ruled that any law indirectly forcing minorities to give up their rights would be void.
- It emphasized a balance between administrative rights and general educational standards.

3. Kerala Education Bill Case (1958)

- The Court reiterated that “choice” is a key element under Article 30 for minorities to establish and administer institutions.
- It emphasized that these rights cannot be curtailed arbitrarily.

4. Basheshar Nath Case (1959)

- This case ruled that **fundamental rights cannot be waived**.

Conclusion:

The Supreme Court's decision supports AMU's role as a significant minority institution, capable of contributing to national importance while maintaining its foundational identity. This aligns with the vision of its founders and the broader goals of Article 30.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Supreme Court's 2024 judgment on Aligarh Muslim University clarifies the interpretation of Article 30 and its implications for minority institutions in India.

India lacks a world-class public policy institution

Source: The post India lacks a world-class public policy institution has been created, based on the article “**India needs a globally recognised public policy school**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 16th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.

Context: The article explains why India lacks a world-class public policy institution. It highlights centralized executive power, weak policy influence, and political instability. It suggests creating a school focused on India's unique dynamics, promoting empathy, and fostering non-partisan collaboration.

For detailed information on **Public policy education in India** [read this article here](#)

Why Doesn't India Have a World-Class Public Policy Institution?

1. Centralized Decision-Making: In India, the executive branch holds significant decision-making power, which is concentrated within a small political elite. This limits the roles of public policy institutions as their influence on policy is minimal compared to institutions in countries like the U.S., where Congress has significant legislative powers.

2. Limited Legislative Oversight: The limited oversight role of the legislature in India compared to the U.S. means that public policy institutions have fewer opportunities to influence policy through a decentralized and deliberative process.

3. Political Dynamics and Stability: The influence of public policy experts in India is heavily dependent on the current political leadership. This leads to instability, as shifts in power can sideline key decision-makers and experts.

4. Lack of Influence of Policy Groups: In India, unless policy groups align closely with the political priorities of the top leadership, they struggle to exert influence. This is different from more institutionalized democracies where think tanks and advocacy groups can maintain influence regardless of the political party in power.

How Can India Develop a Top-Tier Public Policy School?

1. Understand India's Unique Power Dynamics: Unlike the U.S. Congress, India's centralized executive dominates decision-making, reducing policy experts' influence. A policy school must train students to navigate this centralized structure.

2. Focus on Informal Networks: Teach students to work within India's informal networks, caste hierarchies, regional elites, and grassroots movements, as power is often opaque and unevenly distributed.

3. Emphasize Empathy: The curriculum should focus on understanding people's lived realities to avoid top-down policies that can harm local communities.

4. Address Political Instability: Build a non-partisan space for policy interventions that remain relevant despite regime changes, unlike the current system tied closely to executive power.

Question for practice:

Discuss how centralized executive power and political instability in India impact the development and effectiveness of public policy institutions.

Reimposition of AFSPA in Manipur

Source: The post reimposition of AFSPA in Manipur has been created, based on the article "**Express View: AFSPA is a blunt instrument – address political failure Manipur instead**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 16th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3- Internal Security

Context: The article discusses ethnic conflicts in Manipur, worsened by government inaction, distrust, and the reimposition of AFSPA. It highlights historical opposition to AFSPA, poor governance, and unresolved tensions between communities, urging better political solutions instead of relying on military measures.

For detailed information on **Manipur unrest and its impact on regional security** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current Situation in Manipur?

1. Manipur has experienced 19 months of ethnic conflict, resulting in deaths and displacements. 2. The recent violence prompted the reimposition of the Disturbed Area status under AFSPA in six police stations, which has historically faced opposition in Manipur and other Northeast areas.

What Are the Root Causes of the Conflict?

1. The conflict originated from the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status and opposition by the Kuki-Zomi community.
2. Ethnic identities have long influenced socioeconomic and political dynamics in Manipur, leading to entrenched divisions and conflict.

What is the major concern regarding the conflicts in Manipur?

1. **Ineffective Governance:** The state government focuses on blaming outsiders and imposing internet bans, with no effective solutions.
2. **Uncontrolled Weapons:** Over 5,000 looted weapons remain unaccounted for, worsening security concerns.
3. **Administrative Failures:** The issue is viewed only through law and order, ignoring underlying political problems.

What is the History of AFSPA in Manipur?

1. **Initial Imposition (1958):** AFSPA was first imposed in the Naga-dominated districts of Senapati, Tamenglong, and Ukhrul.
2. **Extension to New Areas (1960s):** The Act was extended to Kuki-Zomi-dominated Churachandpur district.
3. **Statewide Implementation (1979):** The entire state came under AFSPA due to armed insurgency in Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley.
4. **Major Protests:** Activist Irom Sharmila protested against AFSPA for 16 years, starting in 2000.
5. **Review and Recommendations:** The Jeevan Reddy Committee in 2005 and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission recommended repealing AFSPA, calling it "highly undesirable."
6. **Recent Rollbacks Elsewhere:** AFSPA has been reduced in other parts of the Northeast due to declining militancy, but Manipur remains an exception.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of government measures, including the reimposition of AFSPA, in addressing the ethnic conflict and security concerns in Manipur.

Indian Ocean Brown Cloud

Source: The post Indian Ocean Brown Cloud has been created, based on the article "**We knew what caused air pollution 25 years ago – but governments still won't act**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 16th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3-Environment (Pollution)

Context: The article discusses the **Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX)**, which discovered the Indian Ocean Brown Cloud caused by biomass and fossil fuel burning. It highlights India's ongoing air pollution crisis, its sources, health impacts, and the need for scientific, long-term solutions.

What is the Indian Ocean Brown Cloud?

9 PM Compilation [Third Week] November 2024

1. In 1999, the Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX) studied haze over the Indian Ocean, led by V Ramanathan.
2. They discovered a giant "Indian Ocean Brown Cloud," later renamed "Atmospheric Brown Cloud with a Focus on Asia."
3. It was caused by biomass and fossil fuel burning, affecting temperatures, rainfall, agriculture, and health.
4. Governments in South Asia ignored the 2002 United Nations report on the findings.

How severe is India's air pollution?

1. A thick haze, up to 3 km, covers the Indo-Gangetic Plains, affecting lives, livelihoods, and the economy.
2. Most Indian cities fail to meet national ambient air quality standards, which are lenient compared to WHO guidelines.
3. India emits 52 lakh tonnes of PM2.5 annually, excluding dust from natural and man-made sources.
4. Major contributors to PM2.5 pollution: Biomass burning (55%), including cooking fuels and stubble burning (6.5%), Industry and power plants contribute 37%, mainly from coal burning, Transport contributes 7%.
5. Health and economic impacts: Indoor pollution from biomass cooking fuels causes 8,00,000 premature deaths annually.

What are the key solutions to reduce air pollution?

1. Energy transition in households:

Shift to LPG, biogas, or electricity for cooking to reduce PM2.5.

Targeted policies like a new PM Ujjwala Yojana can help low-income households.

2. Cleaner industry practices:

Encourage MSMEs to adopt electric boilers and clean technologies.

Strengthen pollution control boards to enforce industrial norms.

3. Stubble burning control:

Mandate harvesters that cut closer to the ground to leave less stubble.

Provide incentives like Haryana's ₹1,000 per acre for stubble management.

4. Improving transport: Scale up electric vehicles and public transport with clear targets.

5. Managing local pollution sources: Strengthen local bodies to control road dust, garbage burning, and construction activities.

Question for practice:

Discuss the various sources of air pollution in India as identified in the Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX) and their associated health and economic impacts.

Open-eyed Justitia statue sparks debate on inclusivity and representation

Source: The post Open-eyed Justitia statue sparks debate on inclusivity and representation has been created, based on the article “Universities are different from religious institutions” published in “The Hindu” on 16th November 2024.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- Judiciary

Context: The article discusses the new open-eyed Justitia statue at the Supreme Court of India, its historical context, interpretations, and public reactions. It questions the inclusivity of justice representation, linking it to caste, gender, religion, and judiciary perceptions.

What is the New Justitia Statue in the Supreme Court?

The Supreme Court of India installed a six-foot white statue of Justitia, a sari-clad, ornamented goddess-like figure without a blindfold. It holds scales in one hand and the Indian Constitution in the other. Former CJI D.Y. Chandrachud unveiled it in October 2024, stating it symbolizes justice that "sees everyone equally."

For detailed information on **The unveiling of a new statue of 'Lady Justice' in India and its significance** [read this article here](#)

What is the Historical Context of Justitia's Imagery?

- 1. Roman Times (1st-2nd Centuries):** Justitia was depicted as open-eyed on Roman coins, symbolizing her ability to evaluate cases clearly and based on merit.
- 2. Introduction of the Blindfold (Late 15th Century):** A 1494 wood engraving depicted Justice with a blindfold, initially seen as a symbol of impaired judgment and helplessness.
- 3. Transformation of the Blindfold (By 1530):** The blindfold evolved to signify impartiality, neutrality, and equality before the law, resisting biases or distractions.

Why is the Statue Controversial?

- 1. Open-Eyed Representation:** The open-eyed Justitia deviates from the traditional blindfolded imagery that symbolizes impartiality and neutrality. **Critics argue it may signify bias.**
- 2. Religious and Cultural Imagery:** The sari-clad, goddess-like figure resembles Hindu iconography, **raising concerns about promoting one religious tradition in a secular judiciary.**
- 3. Public Perception:** Social media users **claim the statue implies justice is influenced by caste, religion, or political identity.**

Why is Justice Representation Important?

1. The justice representation includes themes of protest, resistance, and struggle, emphasizing inclusivity and challenging judicial biases.
2. It Calls for greater representation of marginalized communities in the judiciary.
3. It warns against allowing decolonization to perpetuate old or new forms of discrimination.

What Can Be Learned from this Debate?

1. Justice iconography should promote equality, independence, and inclusivity.
2. Art and symbols must represent feminist, anti-caste, secular, and egalitarian ideals.
3. Avoiding precolonial or postcolonial discrimination is key to achieving fairness.

Question for practice:

Examine how the new Justitia statue at the Supreme Court of India reflects debates on inclusivity, impartiality, and cultural representation in the judiciary.

Bulldozer Justice: Supreme Court's Verdict and Democratic Challenges

Source: The post Bulldozer Justice: Supreme Court's Verdict and Democratic Challenges has been created, based on the article "Two cheers for the top court's 'bulldozer' judgment" published in "The Hindu" And the article "SC verdict is welcome — but the ideological, political bulldozer remains" published in "Indian Express" on 16th November 2024.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- Judiciary

Context: The article discusses the Supreme Court's ruling against "bulldozer justice," where homes were demolished as punishment for alleged offenses. It highlights issues like delayed judicial action, lack of compensation for past victims, and the misuse of building laws to justify demolitions. The article criticizes deeper problems in democracy, such as majoritarianism, craving for strong leaders, and elected officials misusing power. It warns against the rise of "bulldozer ideas," which undermine democratic norms, procedures, and institutions, posing a threat beyond physical demolitions.

For detailed information on **SC Verdict to prevent 'Bulldozer Justice'** [read this article here](#)

What is "Bulldozer Raj" and the Supreme Court's Judgment?

1. Definition: "Bulldozer Raj" refers to the practice of demolishing homes of accused individuals, often in communal or protest-related contexts, as a form of vigilante justice.

2. Origins: It began during the Citizenship Amendment Act-National Register of Citizens protests and spread across India.

3. Targeted Actions: Often focused on marginalized communities; demolitions were celebrated by politicians as instant justice but justified as action against "illegal constructions."

4. Supreme Court's Judgment:

- Declared demolitions without due process illegal.
- Mandated **15 days' notice**, personal hearings, and a right to appeal before demolitions.
- **Proportionality Clause:** Authorities must justify, in writing, why demolition is necessary and explore alternatives like regularization or partial demolition.
- **Accountability:** Officials involved in illegal demolitions will be held personally liable.

What are the issues with this Judgement?

1. Delay in Judicial Action:

The practice of vigilante demolitions began three years ago, during the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests. Despite multiple legal challenges, the Court acted only now, raising concerns about delayed protection of fundamental rights.

2. Lack of Clarity on Past Demolitions:

The judgment did not specify how to compensate victims of earlier demolitions. Although it held officials personally liable for illegal actions, mechanisms for redress remain unclear.

3. Avoidance of Direct Accountability:

The Court framed the issue hypothetically, avoiding clear acknowledgment of targeted demolitions, even when evidence showed selective demolitions and communal bias.

4. Exclusion of Vulnerable Groups:

The judgment excluded slums and informal settlements, leaving the poorest communities unprotected from demolitions.

5. Enforcement Concerns:

Previous guidelines on lynching and hate speech failed due to lack of enforcement. Similar risks exist for this ruling.

What are the deeper issues with democracy?

1. Majoritarianism: Democracy is reduced to majority rule, undermining negotiation and compromise. Numeric dominance often targets minority communities, as seen in communal demolitions and bulldozer justice.

2. Craving for Strong Leaders: There is growing demand for leaders who bypass procedures, celebrated as "tough." For example, banners glorified Maharashtra's Deputy CM after an encounter.

3. Misinterpretation of Elections: Elections are viewed as mandates, granting unchecked power. Leaders behave like kings, ignoring norms. Practices like "guardian ministers" reinforce this.

4. Erosion of Institutional Checks: A survey by Lokniti revealed 33% believed courts and institutions are unnecessary to check leaders' powers.

5. Bulldozing Procedures: Instant justice actions like demolitions bypass due process. For instance, notices were backdated to justify demolitions, targeting slums and marginalized groups.

Conclusion:

The Supreme Court's judgment on "bulldozer justice" highlights the importance of upholding the rule of law and protecting democratic values. Guidelines like notice, hearings, and proportionality aim to prevent misuse of demolitions. However, deeper issues remain, such as majoritarianism, impatience with democratic procedures, and the misuse of power by elected leaders. The "conceptual bulldozer" undermines democracy through excessive statism and populist governance, threatening citizens' rights and foundational norms.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Supreme Court's judgment on "Bulldozer Raj" addresses the misuse of power and the deeper challenges to democratic values in India.

Global rise in diabetes

Source: The post global rise in diabetes has been created, based on the article “**Growing epidemic: India has to scale up diagnosis to meet the 2030 WHO target for diabetes**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 16th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,

Context: The article highlights the global rise in diabetes, especially in India, due to unhealthy lifestyles and improved diagnosis methods. It emphasizes the role of tobacco in increasing diabetes risk and stresses the need for better diagnosis and glycaemic control in India.

For detailed information on **Lancet study: About a quarter of diabetics globally are in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the global diabetes trend?

1. Global diabetes cases quadrupled from 200 million in 1990 to over 800 million in 2022.
2. Adult diabetes prevalence rose from 7% to 14% in the same period.

Why is diabetes increasing in India?

1. **High Prevalence:** India has the highest number of diabetics globally, with 212 million cases, compared to China's 148 million.
2. **Undiagnosed Cases:** 133 million Indians over 30 years remain undiagnosed, the highest worldwide.
3. **Diet and Lifestyle:** Unhealthy diets rich in carbohydrates and saturated fats, along with sedentary lifestyles, are major contributors.
4. **Tobacco Use:** Smoking increases diabetes risk by 30%-40%, as nicotine impairs insulin production and causes resistance.
5. **Improved Diagnosis:** New methods, including glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) tests, identify more cases, especially in South Asia, than earlier single-biomarker methods.

How can diabetes be managed?

1. Early diagnosis is critical. WHO's 2030 target aims for 80% diagnosis and good glycaemic control for diagnosed cases.
2. Managing gestational diabetes reduces the risk of diabetes in both mothers and children.
3. Avoiding tobacco lowers diabetes risk and improves heart health.

Question for practice:

Discuss the factors contributing to the rise of diabetes globally and in India, and the strategies for its effective management.

How greenhouse gases trap heat and cause global warming

Source: The post how greenhouse gases trap heat and cause global warming has been created, based on the article “**Why CO2 is the primary driver of climate change**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 16th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3-Environment

Context: The article explains how greenhouse gases trap heat and cause global warming. CO2 is the main contributor, responsible for 70% of warming. It stays in the atmosphere for centuries and has increased by 50% since industrial times, driving climate change significantly.

For detailed information on **All about Greenhouse gases and Effect** read this article here

Why is CO2 the main contributor to global warming?

- 1. Contribution:** CO2 is responsible for about 70% of global warming.
- 2. Radiative Forcing (RF):** Between 1750 and 2011, CO2 caused the highest heating effect compared to other GHGs.

How does CO2 compare to other GHGs?

- CH4 is 80 times more powerful, and HFCs are thousands of times stronger, but CO2 is more abundant.
- Since industrial times, atmospheric CO2 has increased by 50%, reaching 150% of its pre-1750 level.
- CO2 stays in the atmosphere for centuries, unlike CH4, which lasts only a decade.

Why is water vapor not as impactful?

- Water vapor is the most abundant GHG but has a short cycle of 10 days.
- It does not build up in the atmosphere like CO2.
- Rising temperatures cause more water to evaporate, amplifying warming.

What are the current global emissions trends?

- Global CO2 emissions from fossil fuels will reach 37.4 billion tonnes in 2024, a 0.8% increase from 2023.
- India's emissions are set to grow by 4.6% in 2024, the highest among major economies.

Question for practice:

Discuss why CO2 is considered the main contributor to global warming compared to other greenhouse gases.

Manipur Crisis: Constitutional Breakdown, Judicial Delays, and Government Inaction

Source: The post Manipur Crisis: Constitutional Breakdown, Judicial Delays, and Government Inaction has been created, based on the article “**Manipur as a case for imposing Article 356**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2-Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

Context: The article discusses the ongoing violence in Manipur since May 2023. It argues that the constitutional machinery has failed, urging the President to invoke Article 356 for central intervention to restore peace, citing historical debates and constitutional obligations.

For detailed information on **Manipur unrest and its impact on regional security** [read this article here](#)

What is the current situation in Manipur?

1. Since May 2023, Manipur has faced severe ethnic violence.
2. Over **250 people have been killed**, and **more than a lakh displaced**. Houses, temples, and churches have been destroyed. On **November 9, 2024**, a mother of three was raped and killed, and 17 houses were burned.
3. Unlike insurgencies in Nagaland or Mizoram, violence in Manipur involves **ordinary people as both victims and perpetrators**. People are forced to defend themselves, escalating the unrest.

What is the meaning of the expression "failure of machinery"?

1. The term "failure of machinery" refers to a situation where the **State government is unable to function according to constitutional provisions**.
2. **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** linked this phrase to the Government of India Act, 1935, indicating situations where governance collapses entirely.
3. **K. Santhanam** described it as the inability to maintain law and order due to internal disturbances or external aggression.
4. **Thakur Das Bhargava** explained it as a state where people lose basic liberties and peace.
5. **Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar** stated it is the Union's duty to restore constitutional order.

What does the Constitution say about such situations?

1. **Article 356** allows the President to intervene when a State government cannot function as per the Constitution.
2. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar stated that this provision is essential during constitutional breakdowns.
3. **Article 355** obliges the Union to assist States in maintaining constitutional order.
4. The **President of India** can act under **Article 356** when a State's constitutional machinery fails.

How has the Supreme Court responded?

1. On **May 8, 2023**, the Supreme Court recorded that violence had decreased temporarily but emphasized the need for **law and order** and **rehabilitation**.
2. By **July 2023**, the Court was alarmed by incidents like women being paraded naked.
3. Despite **27 hearings**, the Supreme Court's intervention has been criticized as slow and ineffective.

Why has the government been criticized?

- 1. Prime Minister's Role:** The Prime Minister has been criticized for not taking decisive action to ensure **peace, harmony, and justice**.
- 2. Constitutional Duty Ignored:** Article 355 obliges the Union to assist states during constitutional breakdowns, but it failed to fulfill this responsibility effectively.
3. Critics argue that the lack of proactive measures undermines citizens' fundamental rights to life, liberty, and dignity.

What are the key takeaways?

1. Manipur's situation highlights **constitutional failure, judicial delays, and government inaction**.
2. Immediate central intervention is required to restore peace, justice, and fundamental rights.
3. This crisis demands decisive leadership and proactive measures.

Question for practice:

Examine how the constitutional provisions and the roles of the judiciary and executive have been implemented or neglected in addressing the ongoing crisis in Manipur.

Challenges in India's Commitment to the Global South

Source: The post challenges in India's commitment to the Global South has been created, based on the article **"This time for Africa: India must take forward its commitment to Africa, the Global South"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 19th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2- International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses Prime Minister Modi's visits to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana. It highlights India's commitment to the Global South, strong ties with Nigeria, defense cooperation, economic investments, and the need for active follow-through on global partnerships and forums.

For detailed information on **India and Global South** [read this article here](#)

What is the purpose of PM Modi's visits to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana?

- 1. Strengthen Ties:** PM Modi's visits aimed to strengthen diplomatic and strategic relationships with Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana, emphasizing India's commitment to the Global South.
- 2. Economic Cooperation:** Modi discussed investments and economic cooperation, particularly in Nigeria where Indian companies have invested approximately \$27 billion in various sectors like healthcare and energy.
- 3. Addressing Common Challenges:** The discussions covered shared challenges like terrorism and piracy.
- 4. Global Representation:** In Brazil, during the G-20 Summit, Modi participated in discussions that included the induction of the African Union as a member, enhancing the representation of the Global South.

For detailed information on **"Development Compact" Proposed by India** [read this article here](#)

How is Nigeria significant to India?

- 1. Economic Importance:** Nigeria stands as one of the top African economies in terms of GDP and has recently become a BRICS partner country, positioning it as a vital player in regional and global economic contexts.
- 2. Historical Cooperation:** After Nigeria's independence in 1960, India sent teachers and doctors to assist.
- 3. Shared Challenges:** Both nations face issues like poverty, pollution, and population density, offering opportunities for collaboration.

For detailed information on **India-Nigeria Relations** [read this article here](#)

What are the Challenges in India's Commitment to the Global South?

1. While India has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Global South and South-South cooperation, especially appreciated in Africa, there have been criticisms regarding the lack of follow-through on such commitments.
2. The participation in the "**Voice of the Global South**" conference was not as enthusiastic as expected.
3. **Delayed Summits:** The India-Africa Forum summit has not been held since 2015, despite its importance for Africa-India relations.

What Future Actions are Anticipated?

1. There is an anticipation for India to host the overdue India-Africa Forum summit, last held in 2015.
2. The Foreign Secretary indicated plans to conduct this summit early next year, aiming to enhance cooperation and address global challenges like governance, food, energy, and health security across the developing world.

Question for practice:

Discuss the significance of Prime Minister Modi's visits to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana in strengthening India's commitment to the Global South.

RBI's likely decision to keep interest rates unchanged

Source: The post RBI's likely decision to keep interest rates unchanged has been created, based on the article "**For RBI, a choice: Vegetable prices, growth or currency**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 19th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3-Economy- inflation

Context: The article discusses the RBI's likely decision to keep interest rates unchanged due to inflation concerns, weak domestic demand, and rupee pressures. It highlights growth slowdown, muted wages, weak private investment, and external factors like U.S. interest rates impacting policy decisions.

For detailed information on **The RBI decided to maintain interest rates but change its policy stance** [read this article here](#)

What is the RBI's Current Stance on Interest Rates?

1. The RBI is expected to keep interest rates the same because inflation is above their target range.

2. Even though food prices increased, especially for vegetables, the overall inflation without vegetables was low (3.3% in September and 3.6% in October).

3. The RBI fears food inflation could spill over into core inflation through a wage-price spiral.

4. The RBI maintains an optimistic growth forecast, but indicators show a slowdown. Real GDP growth is expected to fall below 7% this year, down from 8.2% last year. Nominal GDP growth could stay below 10% for the second consecutive year.

Why is the RBI's Concern About Food Inflation Affecting Core Inflation Misplaced?

The concern is misplaced for two reasons.

First, the recent food inflation surge is mainly due to vegetable prices, and excluding vegetables, inflation was only 3.3% in September and 3.6% in October.

Second, significant and persistent food price shocks are needed to affect core inflation, but there is no evidence of such shocks or a wage-price spiral. Labour markets remain weak, wages are subdued, and firm costs are low.

How does the global economy impact India's policy?

1. Impact of US Fed Rates: The US Federal Reserve cut short-term rates by 75 basis points since September. However, long-term US Treasury yields rose from 3.61% to 4.44%, strengthening the dollar.

2. Capital Outflows: Foreign investors withdrew \$14 billion from Indian stock markets in two months, putting pressure on the rupee.

3. Rupee Depreciation: A weaker rupee impacts firms with large foreign currency loans.

4. Policy Constraints: Cutting Indian interest rates could worsen capital outflows and rupee depreciation.

5. Global Trade Policies: Expectations of higher US tariffs under Trump may drive inflation and global uncertainty, complicating RBI's decisions.

What are the RBI's key challenges?

The RBI is balancing inflation concerns, growth slowdown, and rupee stability. Currency pressures and weak domestic demand dominate its considerations. The central bank may reassess its policy direction after December, as external and domestic factors evolve.

Question for practice:

Examine how the RBI balances inflation concerns, growth slowdown, and rupee stability in its monetary policy decisions.

India's Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for the space sector

Source: The post India's Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for the space sector has been created, based on the article "Space, India's final frontier and through the government, a gateway to the stars" published in "Indian Express" on 19th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3- Economy and Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Context: The article discusses India's Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for the space sector. It supports startups, boosts innovation, creates jobs, and strengthens the economy. The fund aims to make India a global leader in space technology and exploration.

For detailed information on **Venture Capital Fund** [read this article here](#)

What is the Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for the space sector?

1. The Indian government has approved a **Rs 1,000 crore venture capital (VC) fund** to support the private space sector.
2. **IN-SPaCe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre)** will oversee the fund, acting as a gateway for startups in space technology.
3. The fund will enable startups to develop and scale innovative ideas in a capital-intensive sector. For example, a startup like **StarTech** can use the fund to launch satellites for high-speed internet in remote areas, bridging the digital divide.
4. The fund is critical for creating a **multiplier effect**, attracting private investment, and retaining companies in India.
5. By fostering innovation, the fund aligns with **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and aims to grow India's space economy to **\$44 billion by 2033**.
6. Countries like the UK, Japan, and Saudi Arabia have similar space-focused VC funds. India's initiative aims to position it as a leader in global space technologies.

How will space technology impact different sectors?

1. **Supply Chain and Transportation:** Satellite data will optimize routes, reduce costs, and improve delivery efficiency. For example, logistics companies can navigate traffic and weather using satellite navigation.
1. **Food and Beverage:** Precision technology will enhance last-mile delivery. Space labs may develop nutrient-rich foods to fight malnutrition.
2. **Defense:** Satellites will improve intelligence and surveillance for national security.
3. **Retail and E-Commerce:** Satellite internet will enable online shopping in remote areas.
4. **Disaster Management:** Space-based systems will provide early warnings for natural disasters.
5. **Humanitarian Aid:** Satellites will monitor infrastructure and track human trafficking for better response efforts.

What challenges could limit growth?

1. **Space Debris:** Increasing debris can pose risks to satellites and space missions, impacting efficiency and safety.
2. **Regulatory Constraints:** Complex regulations could slow innovation and delay projects, affecting private sector participation.
3. **High Costs:** The space sector is capital-intensive, requiring sustained investment. Without private funding, growth could be stunted.

4. Competition from Alternatives: Terrestrial technologies, like fiber optics, could compete with satellite-based solutions.

5. Collaboration Issues: Lack of standardization and harmonization between public and private stakeholders may hinder progress.

What is the significance of the VC fund?

1. Job Creation: Each investment can create hundreds of direct jobs in engineering, software, and manufacturing. Thousands of indirect jobs will emerge in logistics, component manufacturing, and services.

2. Strengthens National Security: Enhances defense capabilities through satellite-based intelligence and surveillance.

3. Global Leadership: Positions India as a global leader in space technologies, competing with countries like the UK and Japan. This initiative supports long-term growth and global competitiveness in the space sector.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for the space sector will contribute to India's economic growth and global leadership in space technology.

India's foreign policy towards its neighbors

Source: The post India's foreign policy towards its neighbors has been created, based on the article “**Yogendra Yadav writes: Is India really ‘neighbourhood first’?**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 19th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2- polity-India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: This article discusses India's foreign policy towards its neighbors. It questions whether trying to dominate the region and using force is in India's long-term interest. It suggests that a more respectful and non-interfering approach might serve India better, focusing on trust and mutual respect.

For detailed information on **India's relationship with its neighboring countries** [read this article here](#)

What is India's Current Approach Towards Its Neighbours?

India's foreign policy often emphasizes dominance in the region. This includes flexing muscles and influencing political developments in neighboring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. However, this has created mistrust and anti-India sentiments.

Why is India's Neighbourhood Policy Facing Challenges?

1. Hostile Regimes: Countries like Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka currently have leaderships critical of India. Nepal's PM K P Oli and Maldives' Mohamed Muizzu have opposed Indian influence.

2. Shift in Alliances: Nepal and Bhutan are leaning towards China for counter-balancing India's dominance.

3. Perceived Interference: India's role in Nepal's democratic transition, the 2015 blockade, and meddling in Nepalese domestic politics are viewed negatively.

4. Growing Anti-India Sentiment: Anti-India narratives in Bangladesh, Maldives, and other nations are gaining traction, often exploited for political gains.

5. Strategic Failures: India's interventions often lack clear benefits. For example, Indian agencies' alleged covert actions in Nepal are perceived poorly.

6. Competition with China: China's growing economic and political influence challenges India's position in the region.

For detailed information on **Challenges in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in 2024** [read this article here](#)

What should be done?

- 1. Follow "Neighbourliness First":** Respect sovereignty, avoid interference, and peacefully resolve disputes.
- 2. Adopt Gujral Doctrine:** India should accommodate its neighbors without expecting reciprocity, promoting goodwill and trust.
- 3. Address Mistrust:** Take responsibility for past actions, as seen in Nepal, and heal strained relationships.
4. The policy of respecting neighbors and prioritizing mutual trust could improve India's relations. Rather than trying to control its neighbors, India could focus on building goodwill, strengthening relationships, and promoting regional stability for long-term benefits.

For detailed information on **India's role in its neighboring countries' political developments** [read this article here](#)

Question for practice:

Evaluate whether India's approach of regional dominance has been effective in fostering trust and stability among its neighboring countries.

Managing High-Altitude Sickness

Source: The post **Managing High-Altitude Sickness** has been created, based on the article "**The dangers of high-altitude sickness**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses high-altitude sickness, which occurs when the body can't adjust to high elevations. It highlights the need for better healthcare facilities, a tourist registration system, early intervention, and treatment strategies to prevent and manage high-altitude illnesses in the Himalayas.

What is High-Altitude Sickness?

- 1. Definition:** High-altitude sickness, also known as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), occurs when the body cannot adapt to reduced oxygen levels at high elevations, typically above 8,000 feet (2,400 meters).
- 2. Causes:** At high altitudes, the air pressure and oxygen levels drop, leading to hypoxia (oxygen shortage in body tissues). Rapid ascent without acclimatization increases the risk.
- 3. Symptoms:** Early symptoms include headaches, nausea, fatigue, and breathlessness. If untreated, it can progress to:

a. High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE): Fluid accumulates in the lungs, causing severe breathing difficulties.

b. High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE): Fluid collects in the brain, leading to confusion, hallucinations, and coma.

4. Body's Response: The body tries to adapt by increasing breathing and producing more red blood cells, which thickens the blood and strains the heart.

5. Severity: Both HAPE and HACE are life-threatening and require immediate medical intervention, often involving descent to lower altitudes.

What are Effective Treatment Strategies?

1. Immediate Descent: Descending 300–1,000 meters is the most effective treatment for high-altitude sickness. Symptoms improve significantly after descent.

2. Supplemental Oxygen: Oxygen therapy can provide relief for acute mountain sickness (AMS) and severe conditions like high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE).

3. Portable Hyperbaric Chambers: These are useful for emergencies where descent isn't immediately possible.

4. Medications: Drugs like Acetazolamide and Dexamethasone offer temporary relief.

What are Infrastructural Challenges?

1. In the Himalayan regions, beyond major towns, healthcare facilities are limited. This makes it difficult to treat high-altitude sickness effectively.

2. Some areas like Leh in Ladakh have specialized facilities, but many high-altitude places lack similar infrastructure.

What should be done?

1. Improve Healthcare Facilities: Establish advanced medical centers in high-altitude regions like Leh, which have specialized facilities for such conditions.

2. Mandatory Tourist Registration: Implement a system to monitor tourist movements and collect data for research on high-altitude sickness.

3. Preventive Measures: Conduct health screenings at entry points, similar to the Inner Line Permit system in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti. Provide preventive medications like Acetazolamide for at-risk travelers.

4. Promote Gradual Ascent: Encourage gradual climbs with rest days to help acclimatization.

5. Provide Emergency Services: Equip states with air-ambulances for quick evacuations. Equip regions with portable hyperbaric chambers and supplemental oxygen supplies.

6. Public Awareness: Share health and safety information online and at checkpoints.

Question for practice:

Discuss the causes, symptoms, and treatment strategies for high-altitude sickness.

India call EU's CBAM "discriminatory"

Source: The post India call EU's CBAM "discriminatory" has been created, based on the article "**How India could counter the CBAM**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment

Context: The article discusses the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which imposes carbon costs on imports. India criticizes it as discriminatory and suggests alternatives like Equity-based Accounting to ensure fairer climate responsibilities and support for developing nations' capacities.

For detailed information on **Challenges of EU's CBAM for India** [read this article here](#)

What is the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)?

1. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) requires exporters to the EU to pay for the carbon emissions associated with the goods they sell.
2. This policy aims to level the playing field by ensuring that imported goods bear a similar carbon cost to those produced within the EU. It is scheduled to fully start on January 1, 2026.

Why does India call CBAM "discriminatory"?

- 1. Unfair Responsibility Under Production-Based Accounting:** The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) uses a production-based accounting principle. This makes exporting nations like India responsible for emissions from exported goods, even though these goods are consumed in importing nations like the EU. **India proposes alternatives like Equity-based Accounting**, which reflects fairer distribution based on per capita GDP and emissions.
- 2. Economic Impact on India:** The EU comprises 20.33% of India's merchandise exports, and 25.7% of these exports (iron, steel, aluminium, cement, and fertilizers) are affected by CBAM. Iron and steel alone account for 76.83% of these exports.
- 3. Revenue Inequality:** The EU plans to keep CBAM revenues (estimated at €5-14 billion annually by 2030) for its own programs like NextGenerationEU. India argues this revenue should support developing economies through technology transfer and capacity building.
- 4. Lack of Justice:** CBAM does not account for compensatory or distributive justice, ignoring historical contributions to climate change by developed countries. It imposes disproportionate responsibilities on developing nations.
- 5. Insufficient Preparation Time:** The EU has had years to prepare for its emission reduction goals (e.g., 20% reduction by 2020 under the 2008 Climate Action Plan and 55% by 2030 under the Green Deal). Developing countries, however, are given minimal time to adapt.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges posed by the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) for India and India's criticisms of the policy.

Electronic Tracking: Solution for Prison Overcrowding

Source: The post Electronic Tracking: Solution for Prison Overcrowding has been created, based on the article “**Prison tag: Tracking devices may be used if they aid bail, help free up jail space**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 20th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance- Prison Reforms

Context: The article discusses using electronic tracking devices for parolees and undertrials to reduce prison overcrowding. It highlights potential benefits, privacy concerns, and legal guidelines. Compact, cost-effective trackers could ensure safety, reduce costs, and prevent rights violations while addressing stigmatization.

For detailed information on **Issues Related to Prisons and Prison Reforms** [read this article here](#)

What is the Proposal for Electronic Tracking?

- 1. Purpose:** Introduce electronic tracking devices to monitor parolees and undertrials, reducing prison overcrowding.
- 2. Pilot Programme:** Supreme Court’s Centre for Research and Planning suggests testing trackers for low risk undertrials.
- 3. Legislative Backing:** The Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023, allows parole if prisoners agree to wear trackers, with leave revocable for violations.
- 4. Odisha Example:** Odisha was the first state to propose tamper-proof trackers for undertrials accused of non-heinous offenses, aiming to reduce congestion.
- 5. Prison Overcrowding:** As of December 31, 2022, India’s prisons housed 573,220 inmates, exceeding capacity by 31.4%.
- 6. Benefits:** Trackers can lower administrative costs, prevent violations, and improve safety, provided they are used with consent and safeguards for privacy.

What Are the Concerns with Electronic Tracking?

- 1. Privacy Violation:** The Supreme Court has raised concerns about privacy infringement. It disapproved of a bail condition requiring an accused to share their location via Google Maps earlier this year.
- 2. Lack of Guidelines:** There are no clear guidelines or minimum standards for using electronic tracking without violating prisoners’ rights.
- 3. Potential Misuse:** Without proper safeguards, electronic tracking may lead to excessive surveillance or stigmatization.

How Could Electronic Tracking Be Implemented Effectively?

1. To avoid stigmatization and ensure compliance, trackers should be compact and discreet.
2. They should prevent parolees from approaching victims or crime-related locations, balancing safety and privacy rights.
3. Clear guidelines should address privacy and rights concerns. Pilot programs can test the technology's effectiveness.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the potential benefits and challenges of implementing electronic tracking devices for parolees and undertrials to address prison overcrowding.

Reasons for the mental health challenges faced by sex workers

Source: The post reasons for the mental health challenges faced by sex workers has been created, based on the article “**A community on the margins, its hidden scars**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 20th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses the mental health challenges faced by sex workers due to stigma, violence, economic pressures, and isolation. It highlights the lack of tailored mental health services and advocates for compassionate interventions, legal protection, and supportive policies to improve their well-being.

For detailed information on **Challenges of sex workers, bar dancers, and transgender- Invisible Indians** [read this article here](#)

What are the reasons for the mental health challenges faced by sex workers?

1. Sex workers experience various **mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, and substance use disorders.**
2. These problems stem from violence, societal stigma, and economic pressures. For instance, many sex workers face **violence from clients and law enforcement, leading to trauma and PTSD.**
3. **Stigma** significantly affects sex workers' mental health by preventing them from accessing essential services. This exclusion from healthcare and support services increases their psychological distress.
4. **Economic necessity** often drives individuals into sex work. The instability of their income and lack of alternative job opportunities cause chronic stress and anxiety.
5. Many sex workers **use substances like drugs or alcohol** to manage stress and trauma. However, this often leads to addiction and worsens their mental health issues.
6. There are **limited mental health services for sex workers.** While initiatives like HIV prevention programs exist, mental health-focused efforts remain rare.

What should be done to overcome the mental health challenges faced by sex workers?

1. **Provide Legal Protections:** Implement laws to protect sex workers from violence by clients, law enforcement, and others. This will reduce trauma and PTSD.
2. **Offer Tailored Mental Health Services:** Establish specific interventions for sex workers' mental health. Initiatives like Kolkata's Sonagachi mental health database project are good examples.
3. **Foster Peer Support:** Develop peer networks to provide emotional support. Reports from European countries highlight the importance of such networks.
4. **Research and Advocacy:** Conduct research to co-design mental health interventions and push for supportive policies tailored to their needs.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the mental health challenges faced by sex workers and the measures that can be implemented to address these issues.

China's role in global emissions and renewable energy

Source: The post China's role in global emissions and renewable energy has been created, based on the article "Why immediate emission cuts from China may not be all that good" published in "Indian Express" on 20th November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 - Environment

Context: The article highlights China's role in global emissions and renewable energy. China must reduce emissions to meet climate goals, but quick cuts could disrupt renewable energy supplies. It dominates clean energy manufacturing but remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels.

For detailed information on **China's climate commitment: How is it significant?** [read this article here](#)

Why is China Considered a "Developing" Country?

1. UN Classification: The United Nations categorizes China as a "developing" country, granting it flexibility in emission reduction targets under international climate frameworks.

2. Historical Emissions: In the 1990s, when the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was finalized, China's emissions were just over **10% of global emissions**, much less than its current share.

3. Economic Transformation: Despite becoming the second-largest economy, China leveraged its developing country status to prioritize growth over strict emission controls.

4. Global Contribution: China now accounts for **over 30% of annual emissions** and has **11.5% of historical emissions**, matching the EU's contribution.

5. Unequal Responsibilities: The Paris Agreement applies differentiated responsibilities, requiring less stringent short-term emission reductions from developing countries like China.

How Critical is China for Global Emission Reductions?

1. China's emission cuts are crucial to meet the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target.
2. A Climate Action Tracker study suggests China must cut emissions by **66% by 2030** and **78% by 2035**.
3. Global emissions are projected to fall only 2% by 2030, far below the 43% required from 2019 levels.

What Are the Challenges and Contributions of China?

A. Challenges of China:

1. Highest Emissions: China contributes over **30% of global emissions**, making it the largest emitter for over 15 years.

2. Heavy Dependence on Fossil Fuels: Coal generates over **50% of electricity**, while renewable energy remains a small part of its energy mix.

3. Difficult Emission Targets: Achieving **66% emission cuts by 2030** and **78% by 2035**, as per Climate Action Tracker, is unrealistic due to rising emissions.

4. Global Supply Chain Impact: Rapid emission cuts could disrupt China's dominance in **solar panel (80%)** and **wind turbine (60%) production**, delaying global renewable energy transitions.

Contributions of China:

1. Renewable Energy Leadership: Added over **300 GW of renewables in 2023** and achieved **1,200 GW renewable capacity** six years ahead of schedule.

2. Affordable Clean Energy: China is the most cost-competitive manufacturer of renewable energy technologies: Costs are 10% lower than India, 20% lower than the US, and 35% lower than Europe.

3. China controls 80% of global solar panel manufacturing and 60% of wind turbine production. It dominates supply chains for clean energy technologies, including batteries and hydrogen electrolyzers.

Question for practice:

Discuss China's dual role as the largest emitter and a leader in renewable energy production, highlighting the challenges and contributions outlined in the article.

SEBI's efforts to regulate the securities market

Source: The post SEBI's efforts to regulate the securities market has been created, based on the article "**Tightening the norm**" and the article "**Free market needs free speech**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 21st November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Context: The article discusses SEBI's efforts to regulate the securities market. It highlights SEBI's proposals to curb manipulation in SME IPOs, including stricter norms like increased lock-in periods for promoters and better fund monitoring. SEBI also seeks to regulate influencers and digital platforms, raising concerns over free speech and jurisdictional overreach.

For detailed information on **New SEBI Rules to Curb F&O Frenzy and Protect Small Investors** [read this article here](#)

Why is SEBI focusing on SME IPOs?

SEBI is addressing concerns about manipulation in small and mid-cap IPOs. Recent SME IPO data shows that 159 companies raised ₹5,700 crore in 2023-24, compared to 31 in 2021-22. SEBI proposed stricter norms, including:

- a. Increasing the minimum application size to attract informed investors.
- b. Raising the minimum investor base from 50 to 200 for better liquidity.
- c. Requiring promoters to lock-in their shares for five years to ensure accountability.
- d. Restricting IPO funds from being used to repay promoter loans.

e. SEBI suggests appointing monitoring agencies for IPOs above ₹20 crore to ensure proper fund utilization. It has warned about promoters inflating business operations to boost stock prices. These measures aim to protect retail investors and maintain market integrity.

Why is SEBI targeting influencers on digital platforms?

1. SEBI is concerned about misleading securities-related content shared by influencers on platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp.
2. Misleading content can manipulate investors' decisions, impacting market integrity.
3. SEBI aims to regulate these platforms, requiring them to block false information, blacklist violators, and report regularly. For example, SEBI penalized unregistered influencers for sharing deceptive content and settled some cases with heavy penalties.
4. SEBI proposes that financial intermediaries only associate with registered influencers to ensure accountability.

What concerns arise from SEBI's move to regulate influencers?

- 1. Disruption to Price Discovery:** SEBI's regulation of speech could harm the price discovery process, which benefits from a mix of optimistic, pessimistic, and neutral views. For example, In the Adani-Hindenburg episode, short-sellers, Adani promoters, and analysts (including influencers) provided contrasting opinions, helping investors make informed decisions.
- 2. Existing Regulations Are Adequate:** SEBI already penalizes unregistered influencers under its existing powers. For example, it uses laws against fraudulent and manipulative practices and mandates that investment advisors and analysts register with SEBI.
- 3. Jurisdictional Overlap:** Digital platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp are regulated by MeitY under the IT Act. SEBI's involvement may lead to conflicts over jurisdiction.
- 4. Threat to Free Speech:** SEBI's proposals risk curbing free speech in the securities market, a fundamental right. The marketplace of ideas allows investors to evaluate different views and build trust.
- 5. Parliamentary Oversight is Necessary:** SEBI's attempt to expand its powers through a circular bypasses parliamentary approval. Expanding jurisdiction over non-securities entities requires legislative endorsement to avoid overreach.

Question for practice:

Discuss SEBI's proposed measures to regulate SME IPOs and their impact on market integrity and retail investors.

Report by the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi)

Source: The post report by the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi) has been created, based on the article "Should packaged food content be labelled?" published in "The Hindu" on 21st November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-food security

Context: The article discusses a report by the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi), which found that food companies sell less healthy products in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) compared to high-income countries (HICs). It highlights health risks, affordability, and the need for better food labeling in India.

What are the various reports related to food products?

1. ATNi report find:

- a. The Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi) analyzed 52,414 products from 30 top food companies.
- b. Products in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) were less healthy than in high-income countries (HICs).
- c. Products scored 1.8 in LMICs compared to 2.3 in HICs on a health star rating system.
- d. Only 30% of companies had strategies to make healthier products affordable for lower-income consumers.
- e. Micronutrient data was less available in LMICs compared to HICs.

2. In April 2024, a **report by Public Eye and IBFAN** found that Nestle's baby foods in India and LMICs had higher sugar content than in Europe. Nestle denied the claim, but the Indian government asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to investigate.

Why is This Significant in India?

1. NCD Burden: India faces a high non-communicable disease (NCD) burden. Over 10.13 crore Indians have diabetes, and obesity affects 24% of women and 23% of men (NFHS-5 data).

2. Dietary Impact: The Economic Survey 2023-24 reported that unhealthy diets cause 56.4% of India's disease burden.

3. Changing Diets: The ICMR dietary guidelines (2023) highlight increased consumption of processed foods rich in sugar and fat, worsening obesity and micronutrient deficiencies.

4. Affordability Issues: Over 50% of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet (UN data). Meanwhile, spending on processed food is rising.

For detailed information on **Nutritional Security in India** [read this article here](#)

What About Food Labeling in India?

1. India lacks strong policies for food package labeling.
2. A 2017 National Action Plan addressed Non-Communicable Diseases but made little progress on front-of-package labeling.
3. In 2022, a draft regulation on labeling foods with high sugar, fat, and sodium was introduced but hasn't advanced.
4. Countries like Chile and Mexico have seen reduced consumption of sugary drinks after introducing mandatory front-of-pack labeling.

What should be done?

1. Implement Mandatory Nutrition Policies: The ATNi report emphasizes mandatory policies, as voluntary efforts by companies have failed to ensure widespread improvement in nutrition.

2. Strengthen Advertising Regulations: Limit the marketing of unhealthy foods, especially to children, as per WHA resolutions.

Question for practice:

Examine the findings of various reports on the nutritional quality of food products in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) and their implications for India's health and food labeling policies.

Delhi's persistent air pollution issue

Source: The post Delhi's persistent air pollution issue has been created, based on the article "**Clearing the air on Delhi's pollution crisis**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 21st November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Environment

Context: The article highlights Delhi's persistent air pollution issue, comparing it to Beijing's effective strategies. It critiques Delhi's ineffective measures, stresses dispersed pollution sources like vehicles, and calls for long-term, integrated plans with political and regional coordination.

What is the air pollution problem in Delhi and other cities?

1. Delhi faces severe air pollution, especially in October, despite long-term efforts since M.C. Mehta's 1984 PIL.
2. Air pollution remains a "wicked problem," needing long-term and coordinated solutions.
3. Other cities like Los Angeles and Beijing face similar issues, with 60% of pollution from vehicles, 20% from soil dust, and less than 20% from other sources.

For detailed information on **Air Pollution In Delhi- Reasons and Solutions** [read this article here](#)

Why have existing measures failed?

1. The **National Clean Air Programme (2019)** has had little impact despite focusing on monitoring, targets, and emergency measures.
2. The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM, 2021)** addresses symptoms but not the deeper, interlinked causes of pollution like urbanization and traffic.

What are the major causes of pollution?

1. **Vehicles:** Account for 60% of pollution due to emissions and traffic congestion.
2. **Photochemical reactions:** Sunlight and low temperatures create ozone from vehicle emissions.
3. **Stubble burning:** Its share in Delhi's PM 2.5 was less than 1% on October 17, but it still draws disproportionate focus.
4. **Dust:** Soil dust contributes 20%, prompting dust control measures.

How does judicial intervention help?

9 PM Compilation [Third Week] November 2024

1. The **Supreme Court** emphasizes the right to clean air under the **fundamental right to life**.
2. It questions why compliance reports show minimal ground results and highlights coordination issues.
3. The court critiques Delhi for relying on "cosmetic steps" and shifting blame to Haryana and Punjab.

What lessons can Delhi learn from Beijing?

1. **Monitoring:** Beijing uses 1,000 sensors to track high-emission areas.
2. **Public transport:** Beijing operates over 30,000 low-floor buses, compared to Delhi's 6,000.
3. **Warning systems:** Smog forecasts are issued 24 hours in advance.
4. **Regional solutions:** Managing regional transportation and secondary pollutants like PM 2.5 is prioritized.

What Should be done?

1. Mandate the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** and create a long-term toxicity management plan.
2. Ensure proper budget and political support for effective implementation.
3. Focus on regional mechanisms and public awareness campaigns instead of quick-fix measures like smog towers.

Question for practice:

Discuss the reasons behind Delhi's persistent air pollution problem and the measures that can be adopted to address it effectively.

Challenges of indoor and outdoor air pollution

Source: The post challenges of indoor and outdoor air pollution has been created, based on the article "**Expert explains: What to know about indoor air quality and purification**" published in "Indian Express" on 21st November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Environment

Context: The article discusses the challenges of indoor and outdoor air pollution, focusing on the impact of PM2.5 on health. It explains how air purifiers can improve indoor air quality but highlights the inequities of relying on personal solutions instead of addressing outdoor pollution sources.

For detailed information on **On Air Quality Standard of India** [read this article here](#)

What is the Impact of Air Pollution on Different Groups?

1. **Privileged Groups:** They stay indoors in homes, offices, and vehicles, where air quality can be controlled. They use N95 masks, air purifiers, and AC cars to reduce exposure.
2. **Vulnerable Groups:** Street vendors, delivery workers, and laborers face prolonged outdoor exposure due to their work. They cannot afford air purifiers or sealed homes, making them more vulnerable to pollution.

3. Gendered Impact: Women in poorly ventilated kitchens face high indoor air pollution from cooking with solid fuels, leading to severe health risks.

How Can Indoor Air Quality Be Improved?

- 1. Limit Entry of Pollutants:** Close windows and doors and seal gaps around them to reduce air leaks.
- 2. Use Air Purifiers:** Place HEPA-based purifiers in high-use areas like bedrooms. Closing doors enhances efficiency. Avoid purifiers emitting ozone, as it worsens air quality.
- 3. Improve Ventilation:** Ensure proper airflow, especially in kitchens, to prevent a build-up of cooking-related pollutants.
- 4. Monitor Air Quality:** Use low-cost sensors to check PM2.5 levels indoors.
- 5. Reduce Harmful Activities:** Avoid burning candles or incense, which release fine particles and harmful gases.

What are the Sources of Indoor Air Pollution?

- 1. Cooking with Solid Fuels:** Releases fine particulate matter and carbon monoxide. Kitchens often have the highest pollution levels, especially in poorly ventilated homes. Women face the greatest burden due to traditional gender roles.
- 2. Burning Incense and Candles:** Emits fine particles and volatile organic compounds, worsening air quality.
- 3. Poor Ventilation:** Traps pollutants indoors, even in homes with modern stoves.
- 4. Outdoor Pollution Infiltration:** Unsealed homes allow outdoor pollutants, like PM2.5, to enter easily.

For detailed information on **INDOOR AIR POLLUTION** [read this article here](#)

How Do Air Purifiers Help?

- Air purifiers use a HEPA filter and a fan to trap PM2.5 particles.
- 2. Activated Carbon Filters:** Help capture gaseous pollutants.
- 3. Clean Air Delivery Rate (CADR):** Indicates purifier efficiency, especially for large rooms. DIY purifiers with HEPA filters and fans are cost-effective. Avoid purifiers that emit ozone, as they can worsen air quality.

What are the Ethical Issues With Air Purifiers?

- Air purifiers benefit those who can afford them but highlight inequality. They address symptoms of air pollution, not the root cause.
- This selective protection may reduce the urgency for systemic changes needed to improve overall air quality.

Question for practice:

Examine the ethical implications of relying on air purifiers to address indoor air pollution while neglecting systemic solutions for outdoor pollution.

India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty compared to India's Model BIT

Source: The post India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty compared to India's Model BIT has been created, based on the article "A bilateral investment treaty with a 'bit' of change" published in "The Hindu" on 22nd November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: The article discusses key changes in the India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty compared to India's Model BIT. It highlights reduced waiting times for ISDS claims, clarified investment definitions, greater specificity in treaty violations, and continuity in excluding MFN and taxation issues.

For detailed information on **Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs): India's Approach and Concerns** [read this article here](#)

What Are the Key Changes in the India-UAE BIT Compared to India's Model BIT?

The new India-UAE treaty includes several departures from the 2015 Model BIT:

1. Reduction in Waiting Period for ISDS Claims: The Model BIT required investors to exhaust local remedies for at least five years before filing an international claim. **The India-UAE BIT reduces this period to three years.** This change addresses concerns about India's slow judicial process and provides quicker access for foreign investors without increasing India's exposure to treaty claims.

2. Simplified Definition of Investment: The treaty clarifies that **investments must involve capital commitment, profit expectations, and risk assumption.** However, it removes the requirement that investments must be significant for the host state's development, a subjective criterion in the Model BIT. This reduces arbitral discretion and provides clearer protection for lawful investments.

3. Clarity on Treaty Violations: Article 4 of the **India-UAE BIT explicitly lists state actions that constitute treaty violations**, such as denial of justice or fundamental breaches of due process. Unlike the Model BIT, it does not reference customary international law, which reduces ambiguity and limits the discretion of ISDS tribunals.

For detailed information on **India UAE Relations** [read this article here](#)

What Continues from the Model BIT in the India-UAE BIT?

Despite the changes, the India-UAE BIT retains key elements from the Model BIT:

1. Exclusion of MFN Clauses: The treaty **does not include the most favoured nation (MFN) provision**, continuing India's policy to avoid this non-discrimination standard in investment treaties.

2. Exclusion of Tax Measures from ISDS: Tax-related actions are outside the treaty's scope. This ensures that foreign investors cannot challenge tax measures, even if they believe the measures are abusive.

3. Limitations on Reviewing Domestic Court Decisions: Article 14.6(i) bars ISDS tribunals from reviewing the "merits" of domestic court decisions. This could restrict investors from raising disputes already decided in domestic courts, but the exact scope of "merits" remains open to interpretation.

What New Restrictions Are Introduced?

The India-UAE BIT introduces additional provisions that were not present in the Model BIT:

1. Prohibition of Third-Party Funding: The treaty explicitly disallows third-party funding of ISDS claims, which could limit the financing options for investors.

2. No ISDS for Allegations of Fraud or Corruption: If an investor faces allegations of fraud or corruption, they cannot invoke ISDS under this treaty.

What Are the Implications of These Changes?

These changes highlight India's evolving approach to investment treaties. For example:

1. The reduction in the waiting period might please developed countries like the UK or EU, but concerns remain about excluding MFN and taxation from the treaty.
2. By simplifying definitions and limiting tribunal discretion, the treaty ensures greater clarity for both investors and states while protecting India's regulatory autonomy.

Question for practice:

Examine how the India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty addresses the concerns of foreign investors while maintaining India's regulatory autonomy.

India's urgent need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA)

Source: The post India's urgent need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) has been created, based on the article "India needs an environmental health regulatory agency" published in "The Hindu" on 22nd November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 - Environment

Context: The article highlights India's urgent need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) to address pollution and health risks. It emphasizes integrating environmental and health data, adopting global best practices, and promoting sustainable policies for economic growth and public well-being.

What is the need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) in India?

1. India faces severe environmental health challenges due to pollution. The air, water, and soil pollutants are linked to many non-communicable diseases, affecting vulnerable groups like children and the elderly the most.
2. India's existing governance model, involving the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), lacks integration with health policies.
3. This results in poor coordination of environmental monitoring and health impact assessments.

How can an EHRA improve India's environmental and public health management?

1. Centralized Data Integration: An EHRA can integrate environmental and health data, enabling policymakers to address pollution and health risks effectively. Currently, there is little coordination between the CPCB, MoEFCC, and MoHFW.

2. Learning from Global Models: Successful frameworks like the U.S. EPA, Germany's UBA, and Japan's MOE demonstrate how integrated approaches to environment and health enhance governance. For example, the U.S. EPA links air quality control with health outcomes.

3. Addressing Regional Variations: Pollution and health challenges vary across regions. An EHRA could work with state and local governments to implement localized solutions.

4. Promoting Economic Growth: The U.S. EPA shows environmental regulation spurs innovation and green jobs. Similarly, an EHRA can support India's energy transition and sustainable practices.

5. Public Awareness and Accountability: By involving citizens, NGOs, and media, an EHRA can promote awareness and advocate cleaner, healthier living conditions.

6. Additionally, it would help India align with international standards and commitments like the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

What challenges might arise with the establishment of an EHRA, and how could they be overcome?

A. Challenges in Establishing an EHRA

1. Bureaucratic Inertia: Coordination between existing bodies like CPCB, MoEFCC, and MoHFW may face resistance due to overlapping responsibilities and lack of data sharing.

2. Industry Resistance: Businesses might oppose stricter regulations, fearing increased compliance costs. For instance, industries could resist pollution control measures similar to those implemented by the U.S. EPA.

3. Operational Independence: Ensuring the EHRA operates without political interference is critical for its effectiveness.

B. How to Overcome Challenges

1. Clear Frameworks: Establish inter-ministerial coordination with measurable objectives for accountability.

2. Global Examples: Learn from the EPA's success in promoting green jobs and sustainable practices while supporting economic growth.

3. Public Involvement: Educate and empower citizens and NGOs to advocate for cleaner environments and hold industries accountable.

Question for practice:

Discuss the need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) in India and how it can address environmental and public health challenges effectively.

Concerns about social media's role in democracy

Source: The post concerns about social media's role in democracy has been created, based on the article "**Is social media doing more harm than good to democracy?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Security-Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges

Context: The article discusses concerns about social media's role in democracy. It highlights how platforms like X (formerly Twitter) are becoming toxic due to ownership influence, like Elon Musk's. It debates the importance of social media for news sharing, the need for moderation to reduce harm, and the value of ethical platforms and decentralized systems for better democratic communication.

For detailed information on **Social media genie is out of the bottle, and we are all trapped** [read this article here](#)

What are the Concerns with Social Media Ownership?

- 1. Influence on Political Discourse:** Ownership by individuals like Elon Musk raises concerns about bias. Musk uses X (formerly Twitter) as a personal tool to shape political narratives, evidenced by his posts being algorithmically amplified.
- 2. Toxic Environment:** The Guardian left X, calling it "a toxic media platform." This highlights how ownership can affect the platform's overall environment.
- 3. Neglect of Content Moderation:** Musk eliminated trust and safety teams on X. For instance, during Southport riots, he reposted harmful content, showing the risks of inadequate moderation.
- 4. Misinformation and Hate Speech:** Platforms like X fail to moderate local content effectively. India, with its linguistic diversity, lacks adequate moderators, unlike Facebook, which performs slightly better.
- 5. Centralized Control:** Monopoly ownership of platforms enables censorship and manipulation, restricting the free flow of unbiased information critical for democracy.

How Critical is Social Media for News Dissemination?

1. Social media is crucial for sharing information because it reaches millions. For example, X has about 350 million users.
2. However, the influence of a few large companies makes it easy for governments to censor information.
3. The decline in referrals from social media and search engines is changing how news is disseminated.

What Measures Should Be Taken to Reduce Social Media Toxicity?

- 1. Increase Moderation Staff:** India, with its vast population and multiple languages, has one of the lowest moderator-to-population ratios. Platforms need more staff to monitor hate speech and harmful content effectively. For example, during riots in Sri Lanka, Facebook lacked local moderators and relied on staff in Hyderabad, leading to poor handling of content.
- 2. AI for Harmful Content Detection:** AI systems should identify and prevent dangerous behavior. For instance, during England's Southport riots, harmful content spread unchecked on X, even reposted by Elon Musk.
- 3. Develop Ethical Platforms:** Decentralized platforms like Bluesky and Mastodon offer safer alternatives, fostering healthy discussions and minimizing harmful content.
- 4. Promote Media Literacy:** Schools should teach children how to analyze and verify information, reducing misinformation's impact on users.

How Can Social Media Support Democracy?

1. Social media can be beneficial for democracy when used ethically. Platforms like Facebook, with billions of users, help people connect and share information widely.
2. However, when these platforms are controlled by monopolistic entities, they can undermine democracy.

For detailed information on **The Rise of Social Media in Indian Politics** [read this article here](#)

Question for practice:

Examine how social media ownership influences political discourse and impacts democracy.

Reasons behind the frustration of India's farmers and scientists

Source: The post reasons behind the frustration of India's farmers and scientists has been created, based on the article "**Why farmers remain unhappy with the government**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 22nd November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 - Agriculture

Context: The article criticizes the government for its lack of meaningful agricultural reforms. It highlights policy failures like nano urea, ignored farmer concerns, and a lack of trust-building. It urges the government to prioritize farmers, seek diverse ideas, and rebuild trust.

Why are India's farmers and scientists frustrated?

1. Policy Inaction: The government has not introduced meaningful agricultural reforms, despite its intentions, leaving issues like biotech crops and natural farming underfunded and unresolved.

2. Failure of Nano Urea: Farmers rejected nano urea outright. Manufacturers had to increase its nitrogen content by 400%, exposing its ineffectiveness. Agricultural universities refuse to endorse it.

3. Unadopted Initiatives: Out of 109 climate-resilient seed varieties launched by ICAR, scientists expect less than five to be adopted commercially.

4. Distrust and Exploitation: Farmers face fertilizer shortages and are forced to buy nano urea to access subsidized fertilizers, eroding trust.

5. Ignored Feedback: Ministers remain inaccessible to farmers and scientists, missing opportunities for innovative solutions and feedback from the ground.

6. Political Priorities: Focus on controlling food inflation sacrifices long-term agricultural interests for electoral gains.

For detailed information on **Why are Farmer's Protesting Globally and in India** [read this article here](#)

What should be done?

1. The government must actively seek ideas from those outside the power structure, such as farmers and independent experts.

2. Listening to feedback can prevent policy failures.

3. Rebuilding trust with farmers is vital for reform success and long-term agricultural development.

Question for practice:

Discuss the reasons behind the frustration of India's farmers and scientists with government agricultural policies and suggest measures to address these issues.

Solutions to India's judicial inefficiencies

Source: The post solutions to India's judicial inefficiencies has been created, based on the article “**The judiciary is slow and clogged — it’s time to get outside help to fix it**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 22nd November 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- Judiciary

Context: The article discusses solutions to India's judicial inefficiencies. It highlights court delays, staff shortages, and administrative burdens. Suggestions include measuring performance, delegating administrative tasks to retired officials, and learning from successful projects to improve case management and judicial efficiency.

For detailed information on **Judicial Reforms** [read this article here](#)

What are the key issues facing the Indian judiciary?

1. Over 45 million cases are pending in subordinate courts, making up 85% of total cases.
2. District courts are burdened with poor infrastructure, such as a **21% shortage of judicial officers** and **27% shortage of non-judicial staff**. States like Bihar, Rajasthan, and Telangana have staff shortages nearing **50%**.
3. Routine tasks, like issuing summons and setting dates, take up **55% of a judicial officer’s time** (as found by the Zero Pendency Courts project).
4. Half of the 90 cases listed daily in an average court get adjourned due to inefficient case-flow management.
5. Many district courts lack technology, such as video conferencing-enabled computers.

For detailed information on **Issues with the justice system in India** [read this article here](#)

What Solutions Did Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna Propose?

Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna suggested two main improvements:

- 1. Measuring Court Performance:** By categorizing judges into performance tiers like high, above average, and below average.
- 2. Positive Reinforcement:** Rewarding high-performing judges to encourage better outcomes.

What past models can inspire judicial reforms?

1. Cataract Blindness Project (1990s):

- a. **11 million surgeries** were conducted in five years across seven states.
- b. Retired armed forces personnel managed logistics, allowing surgeons to focus solely on surgeries.
- c. This demonstrated how delegating non-core tasks improved efficiency.

2. Delhi Magistrates in the 1960s:

- a. Magistrates balanced judicial, revenue, and law-and-order duties while disposing of **60 warrant cases monthly**.

- b. Regular performance scrutiny by the District Magistrate boosted efficiency.
- c. Monthly meetings encouraged accountability and improved case disposal.

3. Retired Officers for Administrative Tasks:

- a. Retired officers from the Controller of Accounts efficiently managed health and population-related tasks.
- b. This shows that retired officials, with expertise in workflow management, can handle administrative court duties.

What are the key takeaways?

1. Administrative reforms, not structural changes, can improve judicial efficiency.
2. Collaboration between state law secretaries, court registrars, and retired officials can bring quick results.
3. The goal is to allow judges to focus on judicial work, leading to a faster, fairer justice system.

Question for practice:

Examine how administrative reforms, inspired by past successful models, can address judicial inefficiencies in India.