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GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE

THE FORMATION OF BRICS: ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **PSIR:** Evolution of the International Economic System
- ❑ **GS2:** Regional and global groupings

FORMATION OF BRICS

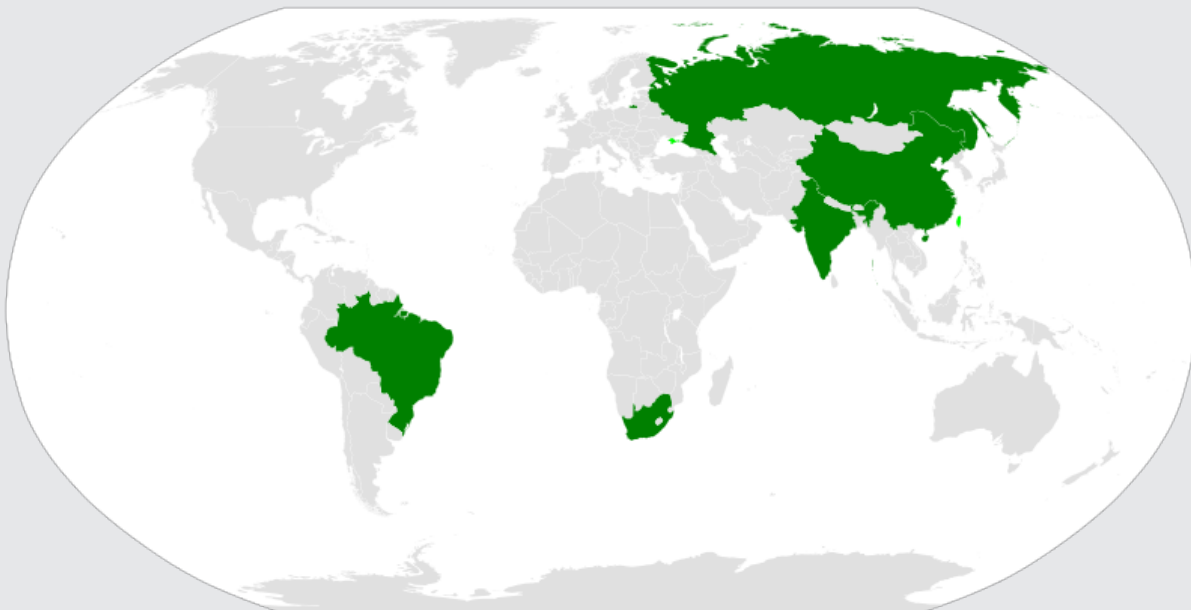
- ❑ **BRIC concept:** The concept of BRIC, a grouping of four emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), was proposed by Jim O'Neill.
- ❑ **IBSA formation:** Two components of BRIC (Brazil and India) formed IBSA with South Africa in 2003, excluding China.
- ❑ **China's inclusion:** China expressed interest in joining IBSA and managed to enlist South Africa's support. This led to the formation of BRICS, overshadowing IBSA.

PROGRESS OF BRICS

- ❑ **Geopolitical and economic focus:** BRICS has focused on geopolitical and economic

dimensions, articulating a common view on global and regional issues and projecting a non-western perspective.

- ❑ **Strengthening multipolarity:** BRICS has contributed to the strengthening of multipolarity and reducing the dominating influence of the West.
- ❑ **Economic initiatives:** BRICS launched initiatives such as the New Development Bank, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), and a comprehensive program for trade and investment cooperation.



CHALLENGES FACED BY BRICS:

- ❑ Lack of support in UN Security Council: China and Russia did not fully support other members' bids for UN Security Council membership, causing disappointment within the group.
- ❑ Imbalance due to China's rise: China's rapid economic growth and increased military assertiveness have disrupted the internal balance of BRICS.
- ❑ Russia-China cooperation: The consolidation of Russia-China cooperation after the Ukraine crisis, economic issues in South Africa, and Brazil's rightist policies have created new tensions within BRICS.
- ❑ Push for a common currency: China's push for a common currency for intra-BRICS trade has also raised concerns about the group's internal dynamics.

INTEREST IN JOINING BRICS:

- ❑ Demand for membership: Nineteen countries have expressed eagerness to join BRICS, driven by the fear of missing out on membership in a visible club and the desire to create a forum of the Global South.

- ❑ Anti-western sentiment: Many countries seek BRICS membership due to prevailing anti-western sentiments and the aspiration to establish a platform representing the Global South.

OPTIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS:

- ❑ Mega expansion: One option is to expand BRICS membership from five to 21, surpassing the G-20.
- ❑ Limited admission: Another option is limited admission of 10 new members, with two each supported by an existing member.
- ❑ Admission of five new members: The third option involves admitting only five new members, with one each supported by an existing member. Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, UAE, and Bangladesh are potential candidates in this scenario.

The upcoming BRICS summit hosted by South Africa may address the expansion issue and decide on the criteria for new members.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE FINANCING CHALLENGES: SOLUTIONS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE ROLE OF THE G20

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **PSIR:** Contemporary Global Concerns: Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice terrorism, nuclear proliferation.

Context: Global cooperation for climate change

The G20 has set up a high-level committee to suggest reform of multilateral development banks (MDBs) so that they are fit for purpose in the contemporary global scenario.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE FINANCING FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

1. Funding Gap: Developing countries face a significant funding gap when it comes to financing climate-related projects. Estimates

suggest that annual investments of \$2-3 trillion are needed for greening in these countries, which surpasses their domestic capacities.

2. Limited Domestic Resources: Developing countries often lack the necessary domestic resources to finance climate initiatives. While annual global savings amount to around \$20 trillion, most of these savings come from developed countries and are not readily available for investment in developing countries' climate projects.
3. Competing Priorities: Climate financing requirements have to compete with other developmental and individual priorities within developing countries. Limited resources make it challenging to allocate sufficient funds for climate-related projects.
4. Reluctance of Developed Countries: Developed countries are often hesitant to provide the necessary funding for climate initiatives in developing countries. This reluctance poses a significant challenge for securing adequate financial support.

SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE FINANCING FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD

1. Leveraging Global Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs): Global MDBs can play a crucial role

in facilitating climate financing for developing countries. They can provide a continuous flow of private capital from the developed world for green projects in developing countries.

2. Establishing an International Foreign Exchange Agency: The creation of an International Foreign Exchange Agency, linked to the World Bank, can offer hedging support for foreign exchange borrowings by green projects in developing countries. This agency would help mitigate currency risks associated with climate financing.
3. Large-scale Project Pooling and Reinsurance: By pooling projects and currencies on a large scale, coupled with reinsurance mechanisms, the costs of foreign borrowed capital for green projects in the private sector can be significantly reduced in developing countries.
4. Sovereign Support for Residual Risks: Developed countries can provide sovereign support to cover residual risks associated with climate financing in developing countries. This support would help mitigate the potential risks and uncertainties involved in climate-related investments.

THE ROLE OF THE G20 IN CLIMATE FINANCING



The G20 committee has a crucial role to play in prioritizing climate financing. Given the multi-partisan consensus on climate change, the committee can leverage this consensus to drive climate financing initiatives.

One approach could involve the establishment of an agency or mechanism within MDBs that specifically addresses currency risks associated

with climate financing. This would be a relatively low-cost option for promoting global well-being.

During India's G20 presidency, pilot initiatives and discussions on climate financing can be initiated to explore effective solutions and strategies for supporting climate projects in developing countries.

UPCOMING MALDIVES ELECTIONS

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ PSIR: India and South Asia.
- ❑ GS2-India and Neighbourhood.

Context: The elections in Maldives will have ramifications for geopolitics in the Indian Ocean region.

With presidential polls in the Maldives scheduled for September this year, significant developments have taken place in the country's politics. These elections, which some observers say will be among the most critical and contentious the nation has seen, will have ramifications not just for its immediate neighbours, but also for geopolitics in the Indian Ocean region.



SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

In the ruling party

Cracks have formed within the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), with members divided in their support to President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and to former president Mohamed Nasheed, who currently serves as the Speaker of the People's Majlis.

In January this year, Solih won the party primary, defeating Nasheed, and will run for a second term in the September elections.

For months, the rift between Solih and Nasheed had been bubbling beneath the surface. But tensions soared when Nasheed, after the primaries loss, openly refused to back Solih and said he would suggest an alternative candidate. Taking the dispute one step further, Nasheed started coalition discussions with Jumhooree Party leader Qasim Ibrahim, although no official announcements have been made regarding a tie-up between Nasheed and the Jumhooree Party.

Simultaneously, several MDP members have refused to extend support to President Solih in the upcoming elections and some have also left the MDP.

THE OPPOSITION

In December last year, the Maldives criminal court sentenced former president Abdulla Yameen to 11 years in prison and fined him \$5 million over corruption and money laundering charges. This became a major problem for the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), which had declared him its presidential candidate. Yameen has denied any wrongdoing.

However, this recent conviction of Abdulla Yameen in a money-laundering and corruption case is likely to disqualify him from the position of presidential candidate, explains Dr. Gulbin Sultana, a research analyst at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, whose area of research includes the Maldives.

As of now, the PPM has refused to field another candidate and has resolved to appeal Yameen's conviction before higher courts. If Yameen is acquitted in time to file his candidacy, it changes the game. "Things are very uncertain, but their main goal is to get Yameen freed," Sultana told media recently.

WHAT TO EXPECT

"Electoral alliances are very important in the Maldives. Since 2008, no party has won on their own. They need alliances to form a coalition

government. That is why negotiations are ongoing, but it is too early to say what is going to happen because there are so many uncertainties," said Sultana. "If you observe the presidential elections in the Maldives, it is always like that. Till the very end, you don't have any clue about what is going to happen."

The split within the MDP may work for the Opposition, some experts believe.

IMPACT ON INDIA

Prior to 2018, when the PPM was the ruling party, the favour extended to China by the Maldives under Yameen's foreign policy was clear. When the Solih administration came to power, New Delhi got some respite from hostilities, and recovered some lost diplomatic ground.

Should the MDP not manage to secure another term, it will raise concerns for New Delhi. In addition to diplomatic relations, there are several high-value India-backed projects underway in the country. New Delhi is also tackling anti-India sentiment, particularly over the last two to three years, which has been weaponised by the Opposition during the election campaign. "But there is an understanding that regardless of who comes to power, they will have to have some sort of working relationship with India," said Sultana.

IRAN-TALIBAN WATER CONFLICT

RELEVANCE

❑ **Syllabus:**

❑ **PSIR:** Contemporary Global Concerns.

Context: Iran and Afghanistan are locked in a long-standing dispute over the sharing of water from the Helmand River.

In News: Iran and Afghanistan are locked in a long-standing dispute over the sharing of water from

the Helmand River. Clashes broke out recently along the border.

Iran and the Taliban exchanged heavy gunfire last week on the Islamic Republic's border with Afghanistan, killing and wounding troops while sharply intensifying rising tensions between the countries.

Both sides accused each other of shooting first.

The clash came amid an escalating dispute between Kabul and Tehran over the Helmand River, which is a vital source of water for both sides, supporting agriculture, livelihoods and ecosystems in the region.

Afghanistan and Iran have been at loggerheads over the sharing of river water for over a century.



The Helmand is Afghanistan's longest river. It originates near Kabul in the western Hindu Kush mountain range and flows in a southwesterly direction through desert areas for a total of about 1,150 kilometers (715 miles) before emptying into Lake Hamun, which straddles the Afghanistan-Iran border.

Lake Hamun is the largest freshwater lake in Iran.

It used to be one of the world's largest wetlands, straddling 4,000 square kilometers (1,600 square miles) between Iran and Afghanistan, fed by the Helmand.

But it has since dried up, a trend experts blame on drought and the impact of dams and water controls.

The lake is of great importance for the regional environment and economy.

WHAT DO TEHRAN AND KABUL ACCUSE EACH OTHER OF?

Afghanistan and Iran signed an agreement — the Helmand River Treaty — in 1973 to regulate the allocation of river water.

But the accord was neither ratified nor fully implemented, causing disagreements and tensions to persist.

Iran has accused Afghanistan of violating its water rights for years, arguing that far less water than the amount agreed to in the 1973 treaty flows into Iran.

“Last year, Iran received only 4% of its share of the river water,” Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran’s ambassador to Afghanistan, said last week in an interview with the state-run Tasnim news agency. Afghanistan has rejected Iran’s accusations, underlining that climatic factors like a shortage of rainfall, resulting in reduced river water volumes, are to blame for the situation.

A major source of concern for Iran is Afghanistan’s construction of dams, reservoirs and irrigation systems along the Helmand River. Tehran fears that these projects reduce water flow into Iran.

But Kabul argues that it is within its rights to expand water storage and irrigation capacities within Afghanistan.

WHAT’S THE STATE OF TEHRAN-TALIBAN TIES?

Iran and Afghanistan share a 950-kilometer land border. Both countries have no major territorial disputes.

Tehran had cultivated good ties with the Taliban before the Islamic fundamentalist group captured Kabul in August 2021 as US and NATO troops were in the final weeks of their pullout from Afghanistan.

Both sides were united in their opposition to the US’s presence in the region.

Even though Iran has so far refrained from formally recognizing the Taliban government, it has been pragmatic and maintained relations with Afghanistan’s current rulers.

A close relationship with Kabul is essential for Tehran to achieve goals such as the preservation of Lake Hamun.

But, since the Taliban seized power, there have been repeated incidents at the border.

“Six months before the Taliban seized power, Tehran received a Taliban delegation, in part to reach agreements on water rights. The Taliban now seem unwilling to honor those agreements,”

said Najib Agha Fahim, an environmental expert from Afghanistan.

Fahim served as a minister responsible for combating natural disasters in President Ashraf Ghani’s government, which collapsed in August 2021.

He stressed the need for a sustainable solution to resolve the water dispute.

“To achieve this, officials and subject matter experts from both countries need to work more closely together and share information to determine how much water is available and how much has flowed into Iran.”

‘Both sides are looking for short-term solutions’

Nik Kowsar, an Iranian environmental expert based in the United States, said both Tehran and the Taliban were showing no interest in addressing the mismanagement of water resources and tackling the environmental problems in the region.

“Both sides are looking for short-term solutions and want to solve their own internal problems,” he said. “The Taliban want to promote agriculture,” he added. “And the government in Tehran is acting as if it suddenly cares about the disadvantaged province of Sistan-Baluchistan after the nationwide protests last year.”

The expert was referring to the widespread demonstrations and political unrest following the death of 21-year-old Jina Mahsa Amini in police custody.

Despite a brutal clampdown, demonstrators in Sistan-Baluchistan continue to gather in the streets to protest the political system.

Water resources from Lake Hamun are critical to the drought-stricken province, one of the poorest areas in the country.

According to Iran’s parliament, 25% to 30% of the population has left the region over the past two decades because of the water shortages and moved to the suburbs of cities in other regions.

WHAT'S THE CURRENT SITUATION?

Public anger in the eastern Iranian region has already been mounting amid water shortages and other economic and social problems. And the latest clash between Iranian and Taliban troops increased the tensions.

On May 28, the commander of the Iranian army's ground forces and the deputy chief of the Iranian police traveled to Sistan-Baluchistan, and said the situation was under control.

Tehran and Kabul have also agreed to set up a commission of inquiry to find out what happened in the border shootout.

In Iran, many people are angry, given that three Iranian soldiers have lost their lives.

"Some people wish for a war against the Taliban," Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Air and Space Forces, said. "However, our enemies are behind these provocations," Hajizadeh said. "They want to start a war out of these clashes on the border. There is no way it will happen."

BRICS FINANCE MINISTERS MEETING IN SOUTH AFRICA

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ PSIR: India and Global South.
- ❑ GS2: Bilateral and Multilateral Groupings.

Context: The grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa is considering whether to add new members and to look seriously at a common currency. Both proposals involve making complex choices.

In News: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was in Cape Town, South Africa recently (June 2023), to attend a meeting of the foreign ministers of BRICS — a grouping comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which is seen as the closest that the 'Global South' has come to organising itself as a collective to challenge a western global narrative.

The foreign ministers' meeting will finalise the agenda for the 15th BRICS summit scheduled to

be held in South Africa in August. Two items on the agenda are attracting attention for their potential for a greater geopolitical consolidation of the grouping: a plan to expand the membership of BRICS, and a common currency.

South Africa, which is in the chair this year, hosted a Friends of BRICS meeting, with 15 foreign ministers from Africa and the Global South.



LOOKING FOR MULTIPOLARITY

As many as 19 countries are said to be in the queue to join BRICS. Among the countries that have been mentioned frequently since last year: Argentina, Nicaragua, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela from Latin America; Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Senegal, Morocco from Africa; Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Türkiye, Syria, Iran from West Asia; Kazakhstan from Central Asia; Bangladesh and Afghanistan from South Asia; and Indonesia and Thailand from South-east Asia.

It is not clear which countries might be admitted, but any expansion can be seen as strengthening the group's heft as a spokesperson of the developing world. By admitting some key countries in the list, BRICS could lay claim to representing more than half the world's population. Significantly, the list includes big oil producers Saudi, Iran, the UAE, Nigeria, and Venezuela.

Rajiv Bhatia, Distinguished Fellow at the policy think tank Gateway House and a former Indian diplomat, said the rush towards BRICS is driven by two basic impulses: "First, there is considerable anti-US sentiment in the world, and all these countries are looking for a grouping where they can use that sentiment to gather together. Second, there is a lot of appetite for multipolarity, for a platform where countries of the Global South can express their solidarity."

CHINA IN BRICS

The idea of BRICS came between 2001 and 2003 from then Goldman Sachs chief economist Jim O'Neill, who projected that the four emerging markets of Brazil, Russia, India, and China would be the future economic powerhouses of the world, with South Africa being added later.

While the economic performance of BRICS has been mixed, the war in Ukraine — which has brought the West together on the one hand and strengthened the China-Russia partnership on the other — has turned it into an aspiring bloc that

appears to be challenging the western geopolitical view.

China is driving the expansion of the group. After a meeting of BRICS officials in February, China's foreign office said "membership expansion has become part of the core agenda of BRICS", but sought to dispel the impression that this was intended to create a bloc.

"Rather, it is for the purpose of creating a bigger living space for the Global South," the statement said — and quoted South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa's view that BRICS was about allowing the "voices of the marginalised to actually be heard".

Significantly, China does not use the word multipolarity — instead using "multilateralism" whenever it hits out at "US hegemony". The theme of BRICS 2023 is: "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism".

INDIA IN BRICS

If India's presence at the G7 summit in Hiroshima, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi also participated in an informal Quad summit, was seen as a sign of New Delhi's US tilt, the importance it attaches to the "anti-West" BRICS is an apparent contradiction — much like the several others it has negotiated through the last year.

Bhatia said India should not be seen as ganging up with an anti-West coalition. "A lot of countries are misunderstanding this. India is also part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and despite problems, it has relations with Russia, with China. While China does want BRICS to be an anti-western group, the Indian view is that it is a "non-western" group and should stay that way," he said.

Some analysts see BRICS as an improbable grouping, with hostiles like India and China unlikely to ever find common ground — a situation that

could get pronounced as it adds members. One view on the expanding membership is that it could sideline India's role in the group.

COMMON BRICS CURRENCY

The idea of a common currency was proposed by Russia's President Vladimir Putin at the Beijing BRICS summit last year. The idea got a cautious reception, with the leaders deciding to set up a committee to study its viability.

The last year of war has seen economies around the world feel the impact of the sanctions on Russia, the resultant spike in energy prices, combined with the rising value of the dollar. An insulation from the dollar is a tempting proposal, but not all members believe that it is an idea whose time has come.

South African foreign minister Naledi Pandor told Bloomberg earlier this year that the idea needed to be "properly" discussed. "I don't think we should always assume the idea will work, because economics is very difficult and you have to have regard to all countries, especially in a situation of

low growth when you are emerging from crises," she said.

There are other complications, such as the setting up of a common central bank of member countries that have different economic and political systems and are located on different continents.

An option is for members to trade with each other in their respective currencies — but as the India-Russia example has shown, this is not easy either. Moscow wants payments in dollars because it does not import enough from India to use rupee payments. Negotiations are stuck.

Asked if India was on board with the idea of a common currency, Jaishankar told a press conference in Mozambique in April: "Individual countries have their own position on the matter."

China has hit out against the "hegemony of the US dollar" as the source of all instability in the world, and is already trying to push the Yuan as a trading currency in Central Asia. But there is no evidence that it is ready to dump the dollar yet.

MULTIPOLARITY: SANJAY BARU'S CRITICISM AGAINST RAJA MOHAN'S VIEWPOINTS

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- PSIR: Vision of a new world order.
- GS2: International relations

INTRODUCTION

Raja Mohan's viewpoints on multipolarity have faced criticism for his interpretation of **even power distribution** and the **presumption of political resentment against the US** and the collective West among advocates of multipolarity.

Critics such as Baru argue that his understanding of multipolarity overlooks key aspects and

misrepresents the intentions and perspectives of nations supporting this concept.

MISCONCEPTION OF EVEN DISTRIBUTION OF POWER

One of the main criticisms directed at Raja Mohan's viewpoints is his suggestion that **multipolarity implies an even distribution of power between major powers.**

Baru contends that **the literature on multipolarity does not emphasise equal power distribution** as a defining characteristic.

Instead, **it highlights the absence of a single or dual dominant power capable of exerting global influence.**

Multipolarity recognizes the **need for collaboration and cooperation** among multiple powers to address global challenges effectively.

MISREPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL RESENTMENT

Raja Mohan's assumption that nations advocating multipolarity harbour political resentment against US power or the collective West is met with scepticism by critics.

They argue that his characterization of **Indian articulation during the Cold War era as anti-Western or anti-communist is inaccurate.**

India's stance of non-alignment and refusal to join military alliances stemmed from its **commitment to an independent foreign policy** and opposition to a divided world.

It was not driven by political resentment but rather a desire to **maintain autonomy** and pursue national interests.

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS ON MULTIPOLARITY

Critics like Baru highlight that not all American scholars view multipolarity as inherently "anti-American" or driven by political resentment.

For instance, **Samuel Huntington's** analysis of the **post-Cold War** era referred to it as "**uni-multipolar,**" recognizing a shift from unipolarity to a more **nuanced distribution of power.**

This perspective acknowledges that global politics has evolved into a complex landscape where various nations, including "**middle powers,**" assert their own national interests.

It challenges **Raja Mohan's characterization of a bipolar world and underscores the diverse dynamics of multipolarity.**

CONCLUSION

The criticism against Raja Mohan's viewpoints on multipolarity highlights the need for a more accurate and nuanced understanding of this concept.

Rather than focusing on an equal distribution of power, multipolarity emphasises the absence of a single dominant power in global affairs.

The presumption of political resentment against the US and the collective West among advocates of multipolarity, as suggested by Mohan, is challenged by critics who argue for a more comprehensive analysis of national interests and independent foreign policy choices.

By engaging in this critical discourse, a deeper understanding of multipolarity emerges, shedding light on the complex dynamics of global power relations.

SWITZERLAND'S FOREIGN POLICIES AND PRIORITIES AT THE UNSC: A FOCUS ON PEACE AND PROTECTION

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2:** Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests.
- ❑ **PSIR:** Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy: Vision of a new world order.

Context: India- Switzerland relations.

INTRODUCTION

Switzerland, with its emphasis on peace promotion and the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, has actively pursued these principles in its foreign policy. This article examines Switzerland's priorities at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and explores the historical reasons behind its peace promotion policy.

PEACE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Switzerland's foreign policy is characterised by twin strands: peace promotion and the protection of civilians in zones of armed conflict.

The Swiss government has played an active role in advancing these principles. Notably, the President of Switzerland convened a UNSC open debate on the protection of civilians, highlighting the country's commitment to addressing this critical issue.

Furthermore, the Swiss Foreign Minister chaired a high-level open debate emphasising the importance of building mutual trust for sustainable peace, urging the Security Council to reflect on its potential for action in the face of increasing crises.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SWITZERLAND'S PEACE PROMOTION POLICY

Switzerland's peace promotion policy is rooted in its own history. Despite experiencing civil wars between Catholics and Protestants for centuries,

Switzerland underwent a transformative period following the last civil war in 1847.

Deep reflection led to the establishment of inclusive federal institutions aimed at building domestic peace.

This historical context helps explain Switzerland's prioritisation of peace promotion in its two-year term at the UNSC.

The country's commitment to peace is evident in its foreign policy agenda and resonates with its own journey towards fostering harmony and unity.

SIMILARITIES IN FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES WITH INDIA

Switzerland's foreign policy priorities align with the Indian principle of ahimsa, emphasising non-violence and avoiding harm to living beings.

This makes India a natural partner for Switzerland in promoting peace. Both countries share converging priorities centred around peace promotion.

India's G20 presidency vision of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which embraces the concept of the world as one family, underscores the significance of peace and harmony.

Together, Switzerland and India, with their respective roles at the UNSC and in the G20, have the potential to make substantial contributions to global peace.

CONCLUSION

Switzerland's foreign policies at the UNSC reflect its deep-rooted commitment to peace promotion and the protection of civilians.

Grounded in its own history and values, Switzerland's priorities align with India's principles of non-violence, making them natural partners in fostering peace and harmony on the international stage.

USA WANTS TO REJOIN UNESCO

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- PSIR: United Nations
- GS2-Multilateral organisations

Context: The issue goes back to 2011, when UNESCO inducted Palestine as a member. Both US and Israel stopped paying their dues and later in 2019, they exited the UN agency.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) announced on Monday (12 June 2023) that the United States will rejoin it in July, four years after it left the agency (along with Israel), alleging that UNESCO was biased against Israel. The move to rejoin will face a vote by UNESCO's member states and is expected to pass easily.



UNESCO is a UN agency tasked with furthering international cooperation and peace through the promotion of educational, scientific and cultural causes. For instance, it designates locations

globally as World Heritage Sites, which means international recognition and possible funding. The United States was a founding member of UNESCO in 1945.

The US Department of State has now “welcomed the way in which UNESCO had addressed in recent years emerging challenges, modernised its management, and reduced political tensions,” according to UNESCO.

WHAT MADE THE US LEAVE UNESCO?

The issue goes back to 2011, when UNESCO inducted Palestine as a member. This led to the US halting the agency’s funding, worth millions of dollars, under then President Barack Obama.

Notably, Palestine is not recognised as a sovereign state by the United Nations. It was included as a non-member observer State over Israel’s objections in 2012, meaning it could participate in General Assembly proceedings but lacked voting rights.

In 2013, Israel’s ambassador to UNESCO, Nimrod Barkan, told the Associated Press that his country supported the United States’ decision to stop its funding, saying it was “objecting to the politicisation of UNESCO, or any international organisation, with the accession of a non-existing country like Palestine”.

The Palestinians claim the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip — territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war — for an independent state. Israel says the Palestinians’ efforts to win recognition at the UN are aimed at circumventing a negotiated settlement and meant to pressure Israel into concessions.

Israel and the United States termed the inclusion of Palestine, UNESCO’s previous criticism of Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem and naming what it said were ancient Jewish sites as Palestinian heritage sites as examples of anti-Israel bias. US laws, owing to the country’s historical ties with Israel, prohibit funding to any UN agency that implies recognition of the Palestinians’ demands for their own state. But this was negotiated recently through an agreement in 2022 that

allowed for giving UNESCO funds again, Reuters reported.

Officials estimated that the US accrued \$600 million in unpaid dues in these years and this amount was one of the reasons behind then US President Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw in 2017, a year after he was elected President. The decision came into effect in 2019. Israel owes an estimated \$10 million and it also cut funding to the agency in the years leading up to its exit.

AND WHY HAS THE US MOVED TO JOIN UNESCO AGAIN?

According to AP(Associated Press), US officials said that the decision to return was also due to China filling the gap left by the US in UNESCO policy making, such as in setting standards for artificial intelligence and technology education around the world.

UNESCO director general Audrey Azoulay, who is Jewish, has worked to address US concerns since her election in 2017, the AP said. “It’s a historic moment for UNESCO,” she said. “It’s also an important day for multilateralism.”

Undersecretary of State for Management John Bass said in March that the US absence from UNESCO had strengthened China. “So if we’re really serious about the digital-age competition with China ... we can’t afford to be absent any longer,” he said. China’s ambassador, Jin Yang, said of the US’ reentrn, “Being a member of an international organisation is a serious issue, and we hope that the return of the US this time means it acknowledges the mission and the goals of the organisation.”

There was no immediate response from the Israeli government.

THE US’S EARLIER WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UN

The United States previously pulled out of UNESCO under the Ronald Reagan administration in 1984

because it viewed the agency as mismanaged, corrupt and used to advance Soviet interests.

It rejoined in 2003 under then President George Bush, who said, "As a symbol of our commitment

to human dignity, the United States will return to UNESCO. This organisation has been reformed and America will participate fully in its mission to advance human rights and tolerance and learning."

COLLAPSE OF UKRAINE'S KAKHOVKA DAM: AN ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

☐ **PSIR:** Contemporary Global Concerns.

Context: Collapse of Ukraine's Kakhovka dam with escalation in its war with Russia

The collapse of Ukraine's Kakhovka dam marks an escalation in its war with Russia. While both sides have blamed each other for the blast at the hydroelectric dam in Kherson, which has brought widespread destruction and loss of lives, experts note that the act amounts to a war crime.



An aerial view shows a flooded area after the Nova Kakhovka dam breached, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kherson. (Reuters)

Being billed as an 'ecocide', the damage from the dam collapse is multifold. Not only are the areas around the Dnipro River inundated with at least 18 feet of water, but the flooding also runs the risk of contaminating freshwater sources and

the Black Sea basin and spreading diseases. The dwindling water level of the Kakhovka reservoir also threatens the agricultural lands of southern Ukraine that depend on the reservoir to feed into the canals used for irrigation.

The damage to a hydroelectric power plant is not only a blow to a renewable energy resource but also adds to the already strained power generation capacity of Ukraine. Compounding the troubles, concerns have also been raised over the risks to Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, which relied on the reservoir for cooling its reactor. Breaching required temperatures could have disastrous results.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal pegs the **preliminary environmental damage at \$1.5 billion**. We take a look at the ecological impact of the collapse of the Kakhovka dam, even as the aftermath continues to unfold.

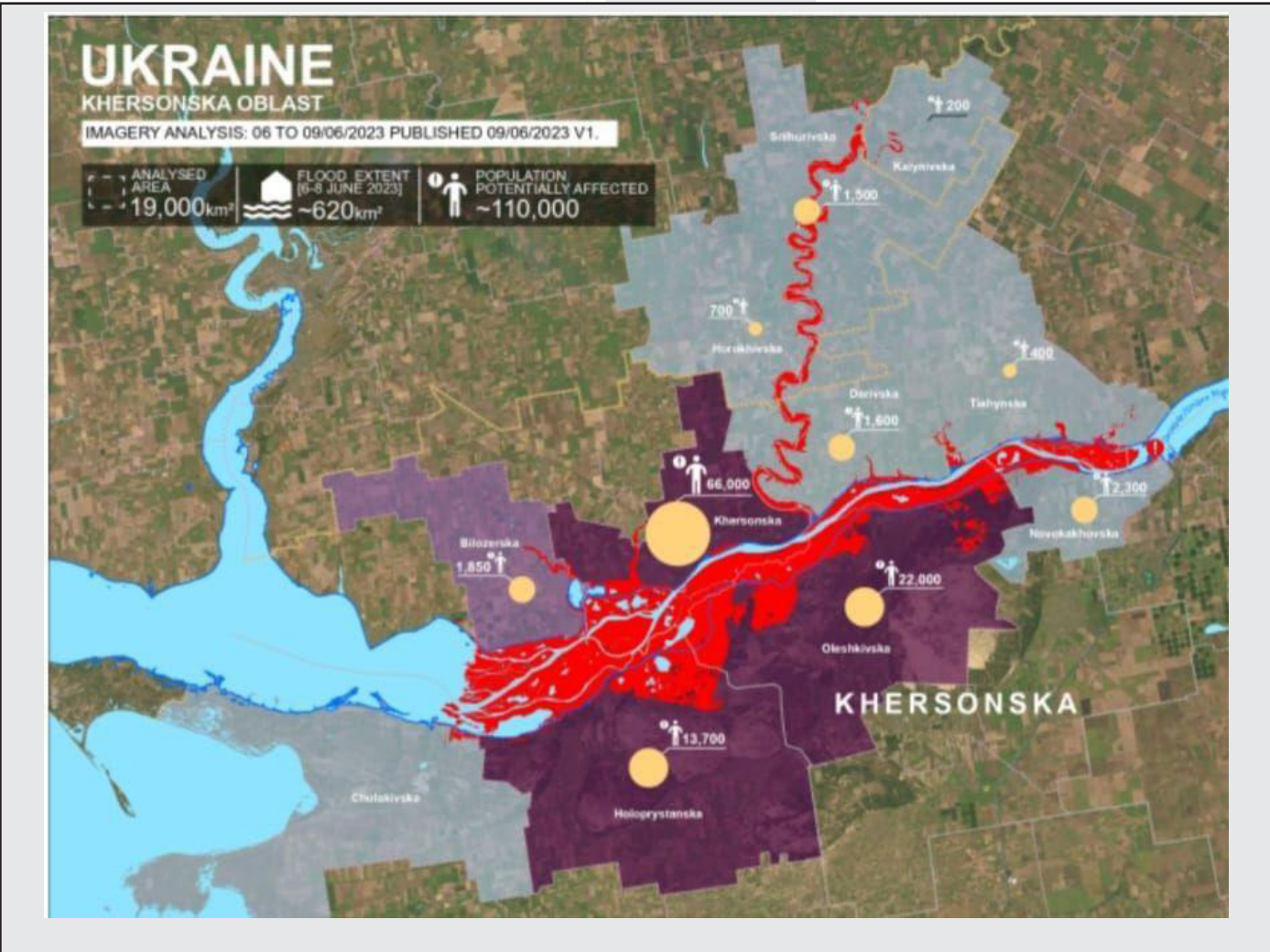
FLOODS AND DESTRUCTION

The Ukraine-appointed governor of Kherson, Oleksandr Prokudin, on Thursday, 8th June 2023

(two days after the dam collapsed) stated that the region was witnessing an average flooding of 18.41 feet. Ukrainian officials estimate that about 42,000 people are at risk on both sides of the river. While the left bank of the Dnipro River remains under Ukrainian control, the right side is controlled by the Russians.

According to Prokudin, 68 per cent of the flooded territory was on the left bank. Russian officials state that nearly 6,000 people have already been evacuated from the affected regions.

Preliminary analysis by the United Nations based on satellite imagery (see graphic below) shows the extent of the flood till June 9. Nearly 620 square kilometres of land have been affected by the flooding so far, and 1,10,000 people are expected to be impacted.



Animals are most vulnerable to the fast-moving water, as rescue efforts are largely focused on people. The 300 animals residing at Kazkova Dibrova Zoo on the Russian-held riverbank have died after the region was flooded.

Calling the incident an “**ecocide**”, the Ukrainian environment minister, Ruslan Strilets, told DW, “I understand that some parts of wild nature we’ve lost forever”. An NGO, Ukrainian Nature Conservation Group (UNCG), states that one of the major impacts will be felt by the fish population, with the water in the Kakhovka reservoir, the country’s largest in volume, dipping, and damage to their spawning grounds. Downstream, the flooding will also impact territorial flora and fauna. The rise in water will increase soil salinity, making it unfit for vegetation.

According to Strilets, around 600-800 tons of oil may be floating in the floodwaters, creating a toxic environment for wildlife. Moreover, as water moves along, it will collect large amounts of pollutants from sewage, industries, gas stations and agricultural lands, and deposit them into freshwater resources. Strilets estimates that around one million people will be left without fresh water.

The pollutants are likely to cause microbes and algae to spread over the surface of the water. This also leads to an increase in diseases, with the most common ones being diarrhoea or skin infection.

Eventually, the water will flow into the Black Sea. The entry of freshwater and pollutants is likely to disturb the marine ecosystem. Noting this risk, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a press briefing during his visit to the affected region said, “it’s not happening somewhere else. It is all interrelated in the world.”

IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE

A statement by the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine said that it “foresees the flooding of approximately 10 thousand hectares of

agricultural land on the right bank in the Kherson region. And also several times more on the left bank of the region, which is currently under occupation.” The collapse of the dam has left “94% of irrigation systems in Kherson, 74% in Zaporizhia, and 30% in Dnipropetrovsk regions without a source of water”. The Ministry warned that the agricultural lands may turn into “deserts” by early next year.

The flooding is likely to make arable lands unfit for agriculture for years to come due to increased salinity in the soil, as well as contamination of irrigation canals. This might be a setback for Ukraine’s grain production, as the southeastern belt around the Dnipro River is cultivated for wheat and millet. Kherson accounts for eight per cent of soybean production, according to data provided by the US Department of Agriculture. Besides, barley and sunflower are also produced in the region.

Often called the “breadbasket” of the world, 64 percent of Ukraine’s wheat is exported to developing countries, including many in Africa. The onset of war has in fact raised concerns over global food security and in July 2022, a grain deal was signed between the warring countries to allow the passage of grains through the Black Sea.

IMPACT ON ENERGY

According to the Energy Damage Assessment report by the UN Development Programme and the World Bank, Russia’s attack on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure has left 12 million people with no or limited electricity.

Ukraine relies on its four nuclear power plants, considered to be a clean energy source, for over half of its energy needs. The largest nuclear power plant in Europe, Zaporizhzhia, which is occupied by Russian forces on June 10 shut down its last operating reactor, owing to the declining water levels of the Kakhovka reservoir. Water from the reservoir was used to cool down the reactors. Though the International Atomic Energy Agency had stated that the nuclear plant wasn’t under

immediate threat as there are alternative water resources such as a cooling pond, the Ukrainian nuclear agency said the reactor was shut down as a safety precaution.

The damage to the hydroelectric dam is also a hit to the renewable energy resources in Ukraine. Ukrhydroenergo, the company behind hydropower generation in the country, on June 10 reported that hydroelectric power plants upstream are functioning at a reduced capacity as a consequence of the collapse of the Kakhovka dam.

According to the World Hydropower Outlook 2023 report, Ukraine has a total of 6,317 MW of installed hydropower capacity. The Kakhovka power plant has a capacity of 375 MW. The blow to the power plant has implications for the future of the country's hydropower, which is already under-utilised according to an analysis by the UkrHydroProject (UHP).

EUROPEAN UNION MIGRATION DEAL

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **PSIR:** Contemporary Global Concerns: Human Rights
- ❑ **GS2:** Policies, Strategies of world actors affecting India's Interest.

Context: The bloc hopes lower irregular immigration would allow EU countries to restart cooperation to spread more evenly the task of taking care of arriving refugees and migrants.

European Union ministers agreed in first week of June 2023 on how to handle irregular arrivals of asylum-seekers and migrants, a deal hailed as a breakthrough after almost a decade of bitter feuds on the sensitive matter.

As the deal took shape, a stabbing in France by a Syrian man who was granted asylum in Sweden 10 years ago drew fresh attention to Europe's migration policies, highlighting political as well as practical challenges lying ahead of any EU migration scheme.

Here are details of the EU agreement, the main question marks and what comes next.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

EU states have been trading blame over providing for the new arrivals since more than a million people – mostly fleeing the war in Syria – caught

the bloc by surprise by reaching it across the Mediterranean in 2015.

The bloc has since tightened external borders and its asylum laws, and struck deals in the Middle East and North Africa to have more people stay there. U.N. data shows fewer than 160,000 sea migrants made to it Europe last year.

The bloc hopes lower irregular immigration would allow EU countries to restart cooperation to spread more evenly the task of taking care of arriving refugees and migrants.

HOW DOES THE NEW PACT ADDRESS THAT?

Each EU country would be assigned a share of the 30,000 people overall the bloc is expected to accommodate in its joint migration system at any given time.

That will be calculated based on the size of the country's GDP and population, the number of irregular border crossings including via sea rescue operations, and more.

Countries unwilling to take in people would instead be able to help their hosting peers through cash – at least 20,000 euros per person a year – equipment or personnel.

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

The agreement would introduce a new expedited border procedure for those deemed unlikely to win asylum to prevent them from lingering inside the bloc for years.

Instead, they should be sent away within six months if their asylum application fails, one of several shortened deadlines in the deal.

That mechanism would apply to all those deemed dangerous, uncooperative or coming from countries with low asylum recognition rates in the EU like India or Serbia.

EU countries could also apply the speedy procedure to people picked up in the sea, caught while trying to get in illegally or filing for asylum at the border rather than in advance.

WILL IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Before eventually endorsing it, Italy and Greece voiced concerns about whether the new system would prove workable given some states' refusal to host people.

The southern countries of arrival worry about being overwhelmed, while those further away from the bloc's external borders tend to drag their feet on admitting arrivals and complex solidarity schemes take time to kick in.

Another challenge is keeping close tabs on the movements of people once they get inside Europe's zone of free travel.

WHAT OTHER ISSUES ARE THERE, AND WHO'S AGAINST?

Rights groups said the scheme risked reviving tragic scenes that unfolded on the Greek islands several years ago by creating more overcrowded migration camps on the edges of the EU.

They said the new plan could lead to protracted detention of minors and criticised it as focusing on keeping people away rather than helping those in need.

Criticism also came from Poland and Hungary, the EU's loudest voices against immigration from the Middle East and Africa.

Warsaw "will not pay for migration policy mistakes" by others, said Mateusz Morawiecki, the premier of Poland, which refuses to host any of the mainly-Muslim arrivals, though it has given shelter to millions of Ukrainians fleeing Russia's war.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Opposition from Warsaw and Budapest did not, however, scupper the majority deal among the 27 EU countries. Spain will now lead more negotiations on behalf of the member states with the European Parliament starting next month.

Green members of the EU legislature denounced the deal as falling short on human rights. They might be joined in opposing it by political rivals from Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party, and Hungary's Fidesz.

But the deal is expected to eventually win enough backing, with the head of the chamber raising hopes for a final agreement before a bloc-wide election in 2024.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS(IGP)

INDIA'S NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING: A LANDMARK OF PROGRESS AND ASPIRATION

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2:** Parliament
- ❑ **PSIR:** Principal Organs of the Union Government

In News: The new Parliament was inaugurated on 28th May.

INTRODUCTION:

India witnessed a momentous occasion with the inauguration of its new Parliament House on May 28, underscoring the country's dynamic evolution and advancement as an independent nation.

Significance of the New Parliament Building

- ❑ **Reflecting Visionary Ideals:** The new edifice serves as a tangible manifestation of India's visionary ideals and aspirations, symbolizing both transformative change and steadfast continuity.
- ❑ **Envisioning "Aatmanirbhar Bharat":** Within its hallowed halls, India's journey towards "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" will take shape, epitomizing the nation's self-reliance and resolve.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE FORMER PARLIAMENT BUILDING

- ❑ **Spatial Constraints:** The erstwhile Parliament House grappled with acute spatial limitations, curtailing its capacity for further augmentation and innovation.
- ❑ **Obsolescent Infrastructure:** Outdated infrastructure necessitated retrofitting endeavors and intricate wiring installations to accommodate contemporary technologies, thereby impinging upon functional efficacy.

- ❑ **Call for Alternative Solutions:** Esteemed figures, including past Presiding Officers, vociferously advocated for novel alternatives, propelling the exploration of more optimal avenues.

KEY FEATURES OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

- ❑ **Expansive and Energy-Efficient:** The new architectural marvel offers expansive interiors and exemplifies commendable energy efficiency, catering to the evolving exigencies of the nation.
- ❑ **State-of-the-Art Technological Integration:** Boasting cutting-edge technological integration, it facilitates seamless audio-visual communication and concurrent interpretations, thereby enhancing parliamentary discourse.
- ❑ **Augmented Facilities:** Members will have unfettered access to an extensive e-library, vital reports, and designated spaces fostering fruitful interactions, consequently elevating operational efficiency.

INSPIRING A PATH TO AN ENHANCED FUTURE

- ❑ **Introspection on Parliamentary Conduct:** The inauguration of the new Parliament building begets a moment of introspection, compelling

a conscientious reevaluation of parliamentary conduct to foster heightened efficiency and productivity.

- ❑ Guiding the Nation's Trajectory: Serving as an illuminating beacon, the new structure ardently steers India's audacious odyssey towards "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat" — an indomitable pursuit of national unity and prosperity.

CONCLUSION

The advent of India's new Parliament building stands as an indelible testament to progress, signifying the nation's remarkable growth and aspirational momentum. Anchored by state-of-the-art amenities, this architectural marvel inspires profound introspection and holds the potential to redefine parliamentary decorum, heralding a resplendent future for India and its citizenry.

LANDMARK DECISION: UNDERTRIAL'S RIGHT TO DEFAULT BAIL IN RITU CHHABRIA V. UNION OF INDIA CASE

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2:** Functioning of judiciary
- ❑ **PSIR:** Envisaged role and actual working of the Supreme Court.

Context: In the case of Ritu Chhabria v. Union of India, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court recently delivered a significant decision pertaining to bail matters.

DECISION OF THE DIVISION BENCH IN RITU CHHABRIA V. UNION OF INDIA:

- ❑ **Affirmation of Undertrial's Right to Default Bail:** The Division Bench upheld the right of an undertrial to secure default bail when there is incomplete investigation and the proceedings exceed the statutory time limit.
- ❑ **Criticism of Premature Charge-Sheeting:** It criticized the practice of investigative agencies filing charge-sheets against accused individuals despite investigations being unfinished. The court ruled that the right to obtain bail is not extinguished by the filing of a preliminary charge-sheet.
- ❑ **Termination of Right to Default Bail:** The court concluded that an accused person's right to seek default bail ceases only when the investigation is completed within the statutory time frame.

RESPONSE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA (CJI) TO THE UNION'S RECALL APPLICATION

- ❑ **Entertainment of Recall Application:** The CJI's court entertained a recall application filed by the Union of India challenging the aforementioned judgement.
- ❑ **Interim Order:** The court issued an interim order directing lower courts to decide bail applications without relying on the Ritu Chhabria judgement for a temporary period.
- ❑ **Indirect Stay:** Despite lacking any direct connection to the verdict, the CJI's court effectively stayed the decision through this interim order.

ISSUES RELATED TO THE CJI'S INTERIM ORDER IN THE RECALL APPLICATION

- ❑ **Recourse through Review Petition:** Usually, the Union of India could only seek recourse

through a review petition, which is typically decided by the same Bench. The CJI's court was not expected to entertain a review petition in this case.

- ❑ **Limitations on Recall Application:** Filing a recall application against a judgement before a different Bench is not permissible and can be likened to bench fishing or forum shopping.
- ❑ **Unprecedented Intra-court Appellate Mechanism:** The CJI's court, by entertaining the recall application, has effectively established a mechanism for intra-court appeals without legislative or constitutional backing.
- ❑ **Expansion of CJI's Powers:** The order expands the CJI's powers on the judicial side, potentially creating an unprecedented intra-court appellate mechanism within the Supreme Court.

POSITION OF THE CJI IN RELATION TO OTHER JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT

- ❑ **Equality of Judicial Powers:** Within the constitutional framework, all judges of the Supreme Court hold equal judicial powers. The CJI, however, possesses special administrative powers, such as constituting Benches and assigning matters for reconsideration by larger Benches.
- ❑ **"First Amongst Equals":** The CJI is considered the "first amongst equals" among companion judges, holding a distinct administrative position.
- ❑ **Voting Power:** In any Bench, including those led by the CJI, each judge holds equal voting power.

- ❑ **Comparative Systems:** Similar systems are present in Commonwealth countries like the U.K., Australia, and Canada, whereas the U.S. employs a collective exercise of power by all judges.

ISSUES RELATED TO THE MASTER OF THE ROSTER

- ❑ **Debated Legitimacy:** The legitimacy of the power held by the Master of the Roster has been the subject of intense debate, owing to instances of alleged abuse and irregularities in case assignment.
- ❑ **Need for Limits:** While the powers of the CJI as the Master of the Roster are meant for smooth administrative functioning, it is crucial to refrain from expanding these powers and establish limits. Computerization of bench formation and case allocation can help reduce discretion.
- ❑ **Administrative Decision-Making:** The CJI's powers as the Master of the Roster should be confined to administrative decision-making and kept separate from judicial matters.

CONCLUSION

The recent decision by the Division Bench in the Ritu Chhabria case reaffirms an undertrial's right to default bail and highlights concerns regarding premature charge-sheeting. The response of the CJI's court in entertaining a recall application and issuing an interim order raises important questions about the limits of such actions and the scope of the CJI's powers as the Master of the Roster. Balancing administrative efficiency with the need for transparency and checks on discretion is crucial for the fair functioning of the Supreme Court.

TELANGANA STATEHOOD: A HISTORY OF THE STATE'S FORMATION

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

☐ **GS2-** State Reorganisation ;Regional and linguistic movements.

Context: What is today Telangana was earlier a part of the erstwhile Hyderabad State, then merged with Andhra to form Andhra Pradesh before finally getting statehood in 2014.

IN NEWS

With assembly elections just months away, political parties across the board are celebrating the 9th anniversary of Telangana's statehood today (June 2).

At the forefront of the celebrations has been K Chandrashekhara Rao, popularly known as KCR, Telangana's sitting chief minister and foremost leader of its movement for statehood. "My best wishes to all the people on this auspicious occasion ... Let us celebrate the history of 60 years of struggle and ten years of progress of Telangana which we dreamed of and fought for," he said.

Telangana, the newest state of India, has a complex history. Pre-Independence, it was a part of the princely state of Hyderabad. While there were talks of statehood in the 1950s, the region was eventually merged with the adjoining Andhra State to form Andhra Pradesh. Finally, in 2014, after decades of struggle, Telangana was carved out of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.

TELANGANA'S PATH TO STATEHOOD.

PART I: PRINCELY STATE OF HYDERABAD, POST-INDEPENDENCE HYDERABAD STATE

Present-day Telangana comprised the south and south-east Telugu-speaking regions of the Princely State of Hyderabad. The city of Hyderabad itself lay at the heart of the region, but unlike the areas around it, was dominated by the Urdu-speaking Muslim elite. Ruled by Nizam Osman Ali Khan,

Hyderabad was among the largest and most prosperous princely states in the country.

In 1945, a communist-supported rebellion broke out in Telangana against the prevailing jagirdari (land-revenue) system. The Nizam's response was brutal, unleashing a local militia, known as the Razakars, on the protesting peasants. Over the next few years, the Razakars committed numerous atrocities on Telangana's population, and grew increasingly dominant in the state's politics.

After Independence and the Partition in 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad was unwilling to accede to India, like most other princely states had done, even after multiple rounds of discussion with Sardar Patel's States Ministry. In the meantime, the Razakars under Kasim Razvi, terrorised the population, lest any attempts to overthrow the Nizam be made.

In order to usher in a modicum of stability in the state, India signed the Standstill Agreement with Hyderabad in November 1947, which stated that all administrative agreements that were in place between the Nizam and the British Crown would continue between the Nizam and India.

However, almost instantly, the terms of the agreement were violated by the Nizam. Not only did he let the Razakars run amok, he also restricted exports of precious metals to India, began negotiating with Pakistan, and stopped accepting the Indian rupee as legal tender. The Razakars even began carrying out "border raids" in neighbouring states.

As the state started falling into anarchy, India intervened militarily, launching “Operation Polo” in September 1948. Within a week, India had taken control of Hyderabad’s administration.

On January 26, 1951, when India became a republic, Hyderabad was accorded the status of a Part-B state, with the Nizam as the Rajpramukh and an elected chief minister. As history would have it, this state lasted less than six years.

PART II: LINGUISTIC REORGANISATION AND THE CREATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH

The erstwhile Madras state was huge, covering areas which spoke all the major languages of South India. In 1952, Potti Sriramalu went on a fast-unto-death demanding a separate Telugu state. He died after 56 days, triggering unrest across the region and eventually leading to the formation of the Andhra State out of the north and north eastern regions of the Madras state in 1953.

Moreover, Sriramalu’s death made the government seriously reconsider its position on linguistic states. The States Reorganisation Committee came into existence in 1953 and submitted its report two years later. Notably, it recommended that Hyderabad be reorganised linguistically – the Marathi-dominant Marathwada would be integrated into the bilingual Bombay state and south western Kannada-dominant districts would be integrated into the Mysore state.

What was contentious, however, was the status of the Telugu-dominant Telangana region. While Andhra wanted to merge with Telangana to create a united Vishalandhra, the SRC itself did not favour this, instead recommending Telangana be a separate state till at least 1961, when it would be given the opportunity to voluntarily merge with Andhra, if it so wished.

But the States Reorganisation Act passed in 1956 ignored this recommendation, merging Andhra State and Telangana into a single state called

Andhra Pradesh, with Hyderabad as the capital. For some, like KCR, this was the point where a struggle for a separate Telangana state began.

PART III: THE STRUGGLE FOR TELANGANA AND THE CREATION OF TELANGANA STATE

However, the sense of Telangana as a separate entity predated even Independence. Under the rule of the Nizam, the Telangana region had in-force Mulki Rules – domicile rules which ensured that only native residents were able to get government jobs in the region.

Since Independence, protests regularly broke out in Telangana demanding the strict adherence to these rules, the first one being in 1952. However, it was in January 1969, after the creation of Andhra Pradesh, that the region witnessed its most widespread protests yet. While the government sprung to action, promising to “transfer all non-Telangana employees holding posts reserved for Telangana domiciles”, the issue refused to die down. The protests gave birth to the Telangana Praja Samiti, which called for a separate Telangana state. Over the next few years, Mulki Rules were at the centre of protests as well as legal cases.

Finally, in September of 1973, Indira Gandhi initiated the 32nd Amendment to the Constitution, which declared that Andhra Pradesh would be divided into 6 zones, with reservation for jobs being decided on the basis of zones. As a result, the original Mulki Rules Act was repealed, and the movement for Telangana lost some steam.

It would finally be revived by KCR in 2001. A member of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), he resigned and established his own political party – the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) with the singular aim of creating a new state of Telangana with Hyderabad as its capital.

While his performances in polls were underwhelming, the sudden death of Andhra Pradesh’s Chief Minister Y S Rajsekhar Reddy of

the Congress in 2009, presented an opportunity to KCR. Reddy was the tallest leader of Andhra Pradesh at the time and post his death, political turmoil ensued. On November 29, 2009, KCR began a fast-unto-death demanding statehood. The Congress, which at the time was also under pressure nationally, relented within 10 days – promising the creation of the state of Telangana.

After extensive discussion on the specifics of the state boundary and the choice of capital (for the new Andhra State), Telangana came into existence around four and a half years later, in 2014. KCR was the first chief minister and Hyderabad was chosen as the joint capital of both Andhra and Telangana for a period of ten years, after which Andhra would have to shift its capital elsewhere.

WHAT IS A FOUCAULT'S PENDULUM, HANGING IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

☐ **GS2:** Union Government: Parliament.

Context: The pendulum hangs from a skylight at the top of the Constitution Hall.

Suspended from the ceiling of the Central Foyer of India's new Parliament building, inaugurated on Sunday (May 29), is a Foucault pendulum that all but touches the floor as it rotates on its axis. The pendulum hangs from a skylight at the top of the Constitution Hall, and signifies the "integration of the idea of India with the idea of the cosmos".



Created by the National Council of Science Museum (NCSM) in Kolkata, the pendulum is being dubbed as the largest such piece in India, 22 metre in height, and weighing a staggering 36 kg.

On the ground, a circular installation has been created to allow the pendulum's movement, with a short grill around it, allowing the visitors to stand around. At the latitude of the Parliament, it takes 49 hours, 59 minutes, and 18 seconds for the pendulum to complete one rotation, as per the details displayed at the installation.

"This Foucault's Pendulum is not something new ... the first one was installed in 1991 at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune. When we first installed it there, we faced some fittings problems which had to be rectified ... The Foucault's pendulum at the new parliament building has a new design ... We have been testing it for quite some time ... To avoid any untoward incident, we even developed a prototype, and installed and tested it at Science City, Kolkata," an expert added.

WHAT IS A FOUCAULT'S PENDULUM?

The original Foucault's pendulum, named after 19th century French scientist Leon Foucault, is a simple experiment to demonstrate the earth's rotation. When Foucault carried out this experiment for the public in 1851, it was the first direct visual evidence of the fact that the earth rotates on its axis.

The experimental set-up involves a heavy object hung from a height with a string, free to swing in any direction. Once set in to-and-fro motion, the pendulum is seen to change its orientation slowly over time. For example, if the initial motion imparted to it was in the north-south direction, after a few hours it could be seen moving in the east-west direction.

Actually, it is not the pendulum that changes its plane of motion, but the ground beneath it. Observers standing on the ground do not notice the earth's rotation, because they too are rotating

with the earth, but can notice the change in orientation of the pendulum.

At the north and south poles, when the pendulum is aligned with the axis of rotation of the earth, the pendulum's back-and-forth motion comes back to its original plane in exactly 24 hours. That is, if it starts swinging in the north-south direction, it then slowly turns in the northeast-southwest direction, then in the east-west direction. It keeps on changing its orientation, till it is back in its original orientation after 24 hours.

At other latitudes, it takes longer for the pendulum to return to its original orientation of swinging. That is because the pendulum is not aligned with the axis of rotation of the earth. At the equator, the pendulum is perpendicular to the axis of rotation, and hence it never changes its orientation of the swing. Meaning, a Foucault's pendulum at the equator would not show any deviation from its original course. At other latitudes it will, and would return to the original course after fixed time periods.

Foucault's pendulum is a standard fixture in many science museums across the world, meant to be an educational tool for children to learn about the rotation of the earth. Till quite recently, the Earth's spherical shape, and its rotation on the axis, were not intuitively accepted by most people. That is why experiments like Foucault's pendulum also represent the spirit of scientific inquiry and scientific temper.

HOW WAS THE PENDULUM MADE FOR THE PARLIAMENT?

Tapas Moharana, Project Incharge, tells that all the components of the pendulum have been completely made in India, and creating the entire piece took them around 10-12 months. The team comprised Moharana, NCSM's Curator-D, along with fellow Curator-D Shatadal Ghosh, and their team. The Central Research & Training Laboratory

(CRTL) is the R&D unit of NCSM, which in turn, functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. Moharana says they had received a call from the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) last year, asking how this could be done. The piece, made using gunmetal, has been fixed with an electromagnetic coil to ensure hassle-free movement, Moharana explains.

“The suspension system is mounted on the ceiling. There is continuous power supply so there are no obstacles (to the pendulum’s movement). The first such pendulum was installed in Pune. We made some alterations here,” Moharana said.

Speaking on the challenges, he said, “Perfectly balancing and installing it at such a height and sustaining it was a challenge. Anyhow, that has been mitigated.”

On the symbolism of the pendulum and its prime place in the hallowed building, Moharana told that Article 51A of the Constitution enshrines every citizen “to develop the scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform”. In keeping with that, there was a decision by those handling the project to have a piece reflecting this.

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING’S INAUGURATION: STORY OF HOW THE OLD PARLIAMENT BUILDING CAME UP.

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

☐ **GS2:** Union Government: Parliament.

Context: The parliament building’s construction took six years, from 1921 to 1927, and it was originally called the Council House and housed the Imperial Legislative Council, the legislature of British India.

India’s New Parliament building was inaugurated today (May 28) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The day has also brought back stories from the first parliament inauguration, that took place on January 18, 1927.

Let’s take a look back at the events leading up to that day and how the construction unfolded.



WHO DESIGNED THE OLD PARLIAMENT BUILDING?

The current project is part of the Central Vista Master Plan, which includes building new facilities for India's novel Parliament building, the redevelopment of Kartavya Path (or what was formerly called Rajpath) and the Central Secretariat to house all the ministries of the Government of India. This central area of New Delhi is also called Lutyens's Delhi, named after one of the two architects involved, Edwin Lutyens. He and Herbert Baker were selected for the project. While Baker was a British architect of repute who had designed prominent buildings in another British colony's city, in South Africa's Pretoria, Lutyens was not as well-known.

At the coronation of George V as Emperor of India on December 12, 1911, the monarch announced, "We have decided upon the transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient Capital of Delhi." The two architects would then build the Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhawan, North and South Blocks, Rajpath, India Gate, the National Archives building and the princes' houses around India Gate.

The parliament building's construction took six years – from 1921 to 1927. It was originally called the Council House and housed the Imperial Legislative Council, the legislature of British India.

But the partnership between the architects wasn't all smooth sailing. If one stands at Vijay Chowk at the centre of Kartavya Path, one end of the road leads to India Gate and the other end seems to be going towards Rashtrapati Bhawan.

However, the President's house is flanked by two other buildings, the North Block and the South Block that house major government offices. The elevation of the road obscured the Bhawan from the view of those present there. As Lutyens designed the Bhawan, this positioning became a source of conflict between the two men.

HOW DID THE OLD PARLIAMENT BUILDING'S CONSTRUCTION TAKE PLACE?

In 1919, Lutyens and Baker settled on a blueprint for the Council House. They decided on a circular shape as the duo felt it would be reminiscent of the Colosseum, the Roman historical monument.

It is popularly believed that the circular shape of the Chausath Yogini temple at Mitawli village in Madhya Pradesh's Morena provided inspiration for the Council House design, but there is no historical evidence to back this up.

Lutyens, in particular, was not in favour of adding hallmarks of Indian architectural traditions in his works, believing them to be inferior in quality. Soon after he arrived in India in March 1912, he wrote to his wife, 'I do not believe there is any real Indian architecture or any great tradition. There are just spurts by various mushroom dynasties with as much intellect as there is in any other art nouveau.

On the other hand, Baker thought that the goal of ultimately projecting the strength of British imperialism and rule over India could also be achieved by mixing Eastern and Western styles. However, he did agree with Lutyens on the superiority of European classicism, upon which he said that Indian traditions had to be based.

In the book *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* by Thomas R Metcalf, he wrote: "In a letter to Baker, still in South Africa, he [Lutyens] described, facetiously, how one would erect buildings in the two chief Indian styles. If a 'Hindu' structure were required, he wrote, 'set square stones and build childwise, but, before you erect, carve every stone differently and independently, with lace patterns and terrifying shape...' If the choice were 'Moghul,' he continued, build 'a vast mass of rough concrete, elephant-wise, on a very simple rectangular-cum-octagon plan, dome in anyhow, cutting off square... Then on top of the mass put three turnips in concrete and overlay with stone or marble as before...'"

A few Indian elements, such as jaalis (a latticed carving depicting objects like flowers and other patterns) and chhatris (a domed roof atop a pavilion-like structure) were finally added.

WHAT WAS THE MATERIAL USED?

According to the official Central Vista website, around 2,500 stonecutters and masons were employed just to shape the stones and marbles required for the construction of the building.

The circular building has 144 cream sandstone pillars, each measuring 27 feet. The total cost of construction then was Rs 83 lakhs. Indian workers constructed the Parliament.

On January 18, 1927, Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, a member of the Governor-General's Executive

Council and in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour, invited Viceroy Lord Irwin to inaugurate the building. The next day, the third session of the Central Legislative Assembly was held there.

With the British regime in India coming to an end, the Constituent Assembly took over the building and in 1950 it became the location of the Indian Parliament as the Constitution came into force.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OLD PARLIAMENT BUILDING NOW?

The building will not be demolished and will be converted into a 'Museum of Democracy' after the new Parliament House becomes operational.

SAFEGUARDS AGAINST EXECUTIVE DOMINANCE IN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES: ASSESSING INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- GS2:** Parliament
- PSIR:** Principal Organs of the Union Government: Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature, and Supreme Court.

Context: Executive dominance over legislature in case of Parliamentary democracy in India

INTRODUCTION

In parliamentary democracies, safeguards are implemented to prevent executive dominance or abuse.

These include **intra-party dissent, opposition rights, the role of the Speaker, and bicameralism.**

However, India has experienced a dilution of these safeguards, impacting the balance of power between the executive and the Parliament.

CURTAILED INTRA-PARTY DISSENT

The anti-defection law in India restricts intra-party dissent by disqualifying members who defy the party whip.

Consequently, it has strengthened party leadership and **made dissent challenging, resulting in reduced checks on the executive.**

This law has failed to address issues like **horse-trading** and unprincipled floor-crossing, further solidifying the party leadership's control.

Intra-party dissent is deterred by the **risk of disqualification** from Parliament.

LIMITED SPACE FOR THE OPPOSITION

Unlike some parliamentary democracies, the Indian Constitution does not explicitly provide a specific space for the political opposition in the House.

The absence of mechanisms like Prime Minister's questions, where the executive faces direct questioning, weakens the opposition's ability to hold the government accountable. This limitation hampers robust scrutiny and diminishes the opposition's role in representing alternative viewpoints and offering critical checks on executive decisions.

LACK OF IMPARTIALITY OF THE SPEAKER

The Speaker, who is expected to represent Parliament's interests, is **not constitutionally required to relinquish party membership** or act impartially.

Consequently, Speakers at both central and state levels often display partisan behaviour, prioritising the executive's interests over those of the House.

This compromises the quality of deliberations, as the Speaker wields control over the conduct of the House, potentially leading to biased decision-making and reduced checks on the executive.

MANIPULATION OF PROCEDURES

The executive's control over parliamentary proceedings in India allows for procedural manipulation.

For instance, the **Speaker's classification of bills as "money bills"** enables the bypassing of effective scrutiny in the Rajya Sabha, undermining the role of the Upper House.

Additionally, **ordinances serve as parallel processes** for lawmaking, enabling the executive to circumvent the scrutiny of the legislature, particularly the Upper House.

These practices erode the legislative process and weaken the effectiveness of parliamentary checks and balances.

IMPACT ON PARLIAMENTARY WORKING

In systems dominated by a single majority ruling party, the power of Parliament becomes limited.

While fractured mandates and coalition governments can provide checks on the executive, the absence of such scenarios leads to a decline in the quality of parliamentary deliberations.

Bills are often passed with minimal scrutiny, and parliamentary sessions are frequently adjourned, resulting in reduced opportunities for effective checks and balances on executive actions.

CONCLUSION

The dilution of safeguards against executive dominance in India's parliamentary democracy raises concerns about the effective functioning of the Parliament.

Addressing these issues, such as reevaluating the anti-defection law and enhancing the impartiality of the Speaker, is crucial to restore the balance of power and strengthen democratic principles.

DETERIORATION OF PARLIAMENTARY FUNCTIONING IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2:** Parliament and State Legislatures—Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these.
- ❑ **PSIR:** Principal Organs of the Union Government: Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature, and Supreme Court.

Context: The new Parliament inauguration has increased debates on actual working of Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

The functioning of the Parliament, as the supreme legislative body, plays a crucial role in shaping India's democratic system. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable deterioration in its effectiveness. This article examines the key reasons behind this decline and proposes potential courses of action to address the challenges.

THE VISIBLE DETERIORATION

- ❑ **Reduction in the Number of Sittings:** One significant issue is the reduction in the average number of annual sitting days of the Parliament. Data from PRS reveals that the 16th Lok Sabha had a considerably low number of scheduled sittings, resulting in limited time for legislative deliberations. Moreover, frequent adjournments further diminish the productive time available for discussion and debate.
- ❑ **Lack of Debates and Discussion:** The proceedings in the Parliament have often been disrupted by disruptions and uproar from the opposition, hindering meaningful discussions. This limits the opportunity for in-depth debates on crucial bills or pressing national issues. It is vital for the Speaker to ensure that the opposition's concerns are heard and addressed, even if they differ from the ruling majority.

- ❑ **Increasing Role of Executives:** The drafting and debating of bills by the legislators have been overshadowed by an increasing reliance on rules, notifications, circulars, and guidelines formulated by the executive branch. This shift diminishes the legislature's role in lawmaking and oversight, weakening the checks and balances necessary for a robust democracy.
- ❑ **Misuse of the Majority:** The ruling party, leveraging its majority, has sometimes misused its power, downgrading the role of Parliament. By classifying bills as money bills, they bypass the approval process in the Rajya Sabha, where the ruling party may not hold a majority. This practice undermines the legislative scrutiny and dilutes the Rajya Sabha's role in the lawmaking process.
- ❑ **Degrading Role of Parliamentary Committees:** The reference of bills to parliamentary committees has significantly declined, limiting their opportunity for detailed examination and scrutiny. The drop in the percentage of bills referred to committees reduces the effectiveness of the legislative review process, leading to potential oversight and weaker legislative outcomes.
- ❑ **Finance Bills and Other Issues:** The introduction of finance bills on the Budget Day itself without prior scrutiny or debate raises

concerns. These bills, which have far-reaching implications, should undergo thorough examination and discussion. Additionally, other issues, such as the absence of a Deputy Speaker and restrictions on journalists' entry into Parliament, further contribute to the decline in parliamentary functioning.

ENRICH YOUR ANSWERS

Performance of Lok Sabhas in General: A Review

The Lok Sabha, as the lower house of the Indian Parliament, plays a critical role in the legislative process and shaping the country's governance. However, the performance of Lok Sabhas over the years has witnessed some notable trends and challenges. This article provides an overview of these aspects, with a particular focus on the performance review of the 17th Lok Sabha.

Terms of Lok Sabhas: The duration of Lok Sabha terms varies, with some being shorter or longer than the standard five-year period. For example, the fourth, sixth, ninth, eleventh, and twelfth Lok Sabhas had shorter terms, resulting in a lower number of sittings. Conversely, the fifth Lok Sabha's term was extended to six years.

Bills to Parliamentary Standing Committees: The establishment of Parliamentary Standing Committees in 1993 aimed to aid the legislative and financial processes of Parliament. However, in recent years, there has been a decline in the percentage of bills referred to these committees. Since 2004, only 45% of the total bills introduced in Parliament have been sent to committees, with a further decrease observed in the 16th and 17th Lok Sabhas.

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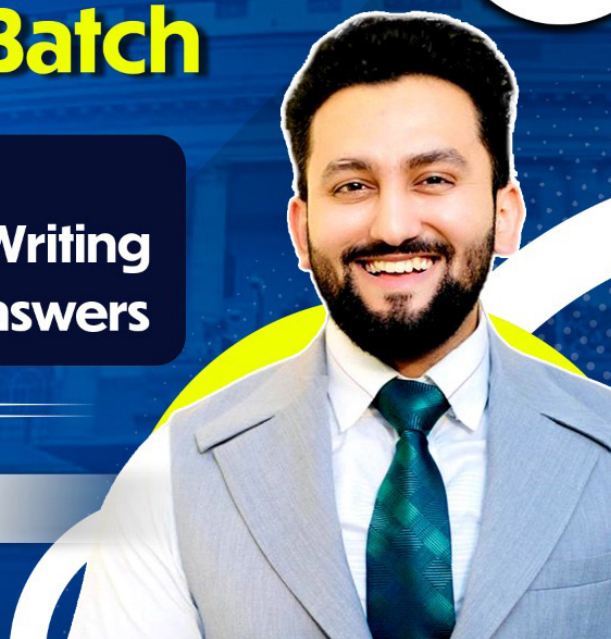
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Know the Details

By - Shashank Tyagi



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A poor performance

The charts are sourced from PRS Legislative Research's Vital Stats: Parliament Functioning in Budget Session 2023. The PRS had collated data from the Bulletins of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha and the Statistical Handbook



Chart 1



Chart 2

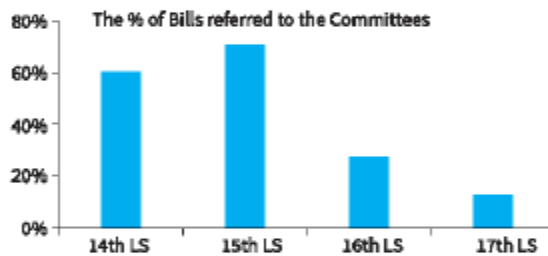


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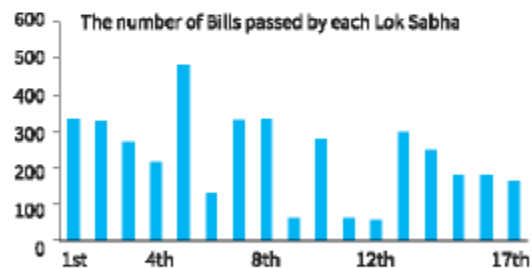


Chart 4

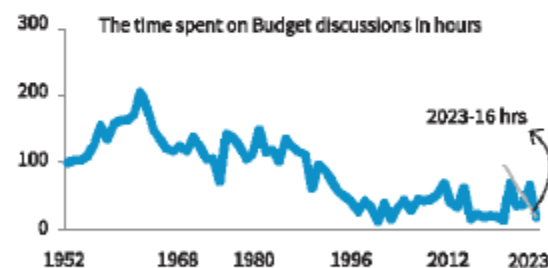


Chart 5

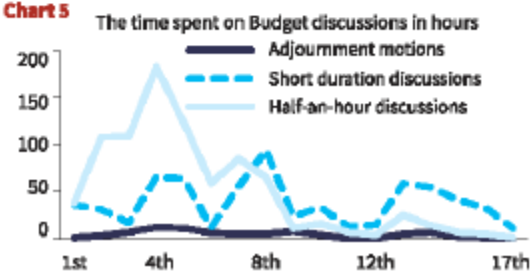


Chart 6

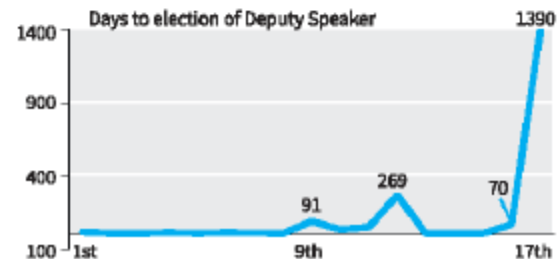


Image Source: The Hindu

Lack of Accountability Provisions: The Rules of Procedure of both Houses of Parliament contain provisions to hold the government accountable and facilitate discussions on matters of public importance. However, the 17th Lok Sabha has witnessed limited utilization of these provisions. Only 11 short-duration discussions and one half-an-hour discussion have been held so far, with none taking place in the latest session.

Bills Introduced and Passed: In the 17th Lok Sabha, a total of 150 bills have been introduced, out of which 131 have been passed (excluding Finance and Appropriation Bills). Notably, the number of bills introduced and passed has been relatively low in the last four consecutive sessions, with fewer than 10 bills introduced or passed in each session.

Sitting Days: The 17th Lok Sabha may likely have the **shortest duration of sitting days since 1952**, making it the shortest full-term Lok Sabha in recent history.

Budget Sessions: The latest Budget session of the 17th Lok Sabha was one of the shortest since 1952. The discussion on financial matters, including the Budget, accounted for **18 hours**, compared to an average of 55 hours in previous Budget sessions of this Lok Sabha.

Non-election of Deputy Speaker: Article 93 of the Indian Constitution mandates the election of a Deputy Speaker for the Lok Sabha. However, despite a notice from the Supreme Court, the 17th Lok Sabha has not yet elected a Deputy Speaker, even as it approaches the final year of its five-year term.

Conclusion

The performance of Lok Sabhas in India has witnessed various challenges and trends. The 17th Lok Sabha, in particular, has faced criticisms regarding the limited utilization of accountability provisions, fewer bills referred to parliamentary committees, a decline in sitting days, and the absence of a Deputy Speaker. Recognizing these

shortcomings and taking corrective measures are crucial to ensure effective legislative functioning and uphold the principles of democratic governance in the country.

COURSE OF ACTION

To address the challenges and enhance parliamentary functioning, several measures can be undertaken:

- ❑ Increase the number of sitting days and minimize adjournments to maximize the productive time available for debates and discussions.
- ❑ Foster a culture of constructive and respectful dialogue among parliamentarians to encourage meaningful deliberations on bills and national issues.
- ❑ Reinforce the independence and effectiveness of parliamentary committees by restoring their prominence and ensuring a higher percentage of bills are referred to them for scrutiny.
- ❑ Enhance transparency and accountability by facilitating greater public access to parliamentary proceedings and promoting the active involvement of citizens in the legislative process.
- ❑ Strengthen the role of the Speaker in maintaining decorum and impartiality, allowing for a fair representation of all voices and perspectives.
- ❑ Revise the procedures for finance bills, ensuring adequate time for review and discussion to prevent undue haste in passing critical legislation.
- ❑ Promote active engagement between the executive and legislative branches, fostering a collaborative approach to lawmaking and policy formulation.

CONCLUSION

The functioning of the Parliament is vital for a vibrant democracy like India. Recognizing the challenges and taking corrective measures is

crucial to restore its effectiveness. By enhancing transparency, promoting robust debates, and reinforcing the role of parliamentary committees,

India can ensure that its Parliament serves as an effective platform for democratic governance and meaningful legislative action.

EVOLUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISM IN INDIA: FROM COLONIAL ERA TO CONTEMPORARY TIMES

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- ❑ **GS2:** Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
- ❑ **PSIR:** Social Movement: Civil liberties and human rights movements; women's movements; environmentalist movements

Context: A few nationally acclaimed wrestlers have been protesting against their federation chief, allegedly for sexual harassment.

INTRODUCTION

Civil society activism in India has witnessed various characteristics and transformations over time.

This article examines the historical context of middle-class activism during the colonial period and its subsequent evolution, highlighting the changing nature of civil society engagement in India, particularly in the post-2014 era.

COLONIAL PERIOD: MIDDLE-CLASS ACTIVISM

During the colonial era, middle-class activism emerged as a force for social change.

Led by urban elites from upper castes and middle classes, it focused on socio-economic initiatives and aimed to uplift individuals from lower social strata.

While influenced by social conservatism and caste divisions, this activism had a pluralistic and egalitarian dimension, reflecting a commitment to addressing social inequality and uplifting marginalised communities.

POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA: SHIFT IN MIDDLE-CLASS PARTICIPATION

From the Nehruvian era onwards, the middle classes became integrated into state-centric power structures and the political economy.

Consequently, their engagement in civil society participation diminished. Scholars have observed a dominance of caste and **community-based organisations**, pointing to the absence of a modern civil society in India.

However, others acknowledge the role of these organisations in contributing to the democratisation process by articulating and representing group identities and interests.

RISE OF MIDDLE-CLASS ACTIVISM AND CHANGING DYNAMICS

During the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, there was a resurgence of urban, middle-class activism, primarily driven by concerns over political corruption.

The middle class, disillusioned by mass-based politics and vote bank strategies, associated

technocratic governance and entrepreneurship with progress.

However, this activism was often influenced by the ideology of the ruling party, leading to a weakened attachment to independent social actors.

Movements like the **Anna Andolan and Narmada Bachao Andolan** faced challenges, with **limited success** in achieving their goals.

CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE: CONTINUING INFLUENCE AND NEW DYNAMICS

Despite these shifts, popular mobilisation and civil society activism persist in certain regions.

Labour rights organisations in **Tamil Nadu** compelled the government to halt the implementation of a new labour law, demonstrating the continued influence of such groups.

The **recent farmers' agitation in northern India** showcases the power and impact of these organisations, as they rally in support of the protesting farmers.

These examples suggest that while the nature of civil society activism has evolved, there remains space for collective action and the advancement of societal concerns.

CONCLUSION

The nature of civil society activism in India has undergone significant changes, influenced by historical, political, and socio-economic factors.

From the colonial period to the present, **middle-class participation**, dominant caste/community-based organisations, and evolving ideological dynamics have shaped the landscape of civil society engagement, highlighting the complexities and dynamics of social movements in India.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT (APUAPA)

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

☐ **GS2-** Union and State ;Federalism.

Context: A 2014 Arunachal Pradesh law is facing opposition, legal challenge

A legislation enacted in Arunachal Pradesh in 2014, the Arunachal Pradesh Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (APUAPA), is currently under the scanner, with civil society organisations demanding its repeal and a petition challenging it before the Itanagar bench of the Gauhati High Court.

WHAT IS APUAPA?

The APUAPA was notified in 2014 “to provide for more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations.” It enables the state government or any official not below the rank of a Secretary to the State Government or a District Magistrate to make an order for detaining certain categories of people to prevent them from “acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State, or maintenance of public order

or maintenance of daily supplies and services essential to the public”.

These categories of people include “any person who is bootlegger, habitual depredator of environment, habitual drug offender, property grabber, dangerous persons, unlawful persons associated with unlawful activities”

The Act defines public order as having been affected adversely as “directly or indirectly causing

or is likely to cause any harm, danger or alarm or feeling of insecurity among the general public or any section thereof or a grave or widespread danger to life, property or public health.”

Within three weeks of detention, the matter is to be placed before an advisory board which will give its opinion on whether there is sufficient cause for detention of an individual. If its opinion is that there is sufficient cause, a person can be detained for up to six months under the act.

WHAT PROMPTED THE CURRENT FOCUS ON THIS ACT?

The Act suddenly drew attention last month when 41 people were booked and detained under it after a call was issued for a 72-hour bandh in various districts of the state from May 10 to 12. These included prominent anti-corruption activist Sol Dodum, Aam Aadmi Party’s Arunachal Pradesh convener Tana Tamar Tara, and Chairman of Pro-Dam Movement of Arunachal Pradesh Taw Paul.

The bandh call had been issued in protest against the 2022 Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission paper leak case in which 42 government employees have been arrested so far. The protest call was to demand the implementation of 13-point charter of demands, including declaring all examinations conducted by the APPSC where anomalies were found as “null and void”. Thirty people had been detained under the APUAPA on May 9 and 10 even before the bandh commenced. Eighteen of them were released on May 29, while the remaining were released last week.

WAS THIS THE FIRST TIME THE APUAPA WAS INVOKED?

According to lawyer Ebo Milli, while the Act has been invoked in the past, the mass detentions under it in this case drew the attention of a

population among which awareness on this Act had been limited so far.

“They did use APUAPA earlier too but not on such a scale. The reason there has been a huge outcry this time is that those detained were vocal about a fair probe into the APSC fiasco. Many people became aware of the APUAPA only after the current detentions,” Milli said.

WHAT ARE THE GROUNDS ON WHICH IT IS BEING OPPOSED?

Activist Gyadi Paying has filed a petition challenging the constitutional validity of the Act and seeking its abolition. Among the grounds on which this is being sought is that it does not allow a detainee legal representation before the advisory board deliberating on their case, which, the petition states, is a violation of fundamental rights.

The petition also points to a clause of the Act in which if the officer making the detention order has reason to believe that the person for whom the order has been made is absconding, they may apply provisions of the CrPC attaching the person’s property. This, the petition states, amounts to “illegal encroachment beyond the jurisdiction of a district magistrate”.

The Arunachal Law Students’ Union has also demanded its repeal, calling it draconian and arbitrary.

“This Act talks about violation of environmental issues, drugs smugglers, property destruction, obstruction of daily necessities, etc. which are already covered under IPC and other laws. Why does the government need extra power when these violators can be booked under given laws?” said Milli.

RIGHT TO CHANGE ONE'S NAME IS PART OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE: RULINGS BY TWO HIGH COURTS.

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

☐ **GS2:** Fundamental Rights

Context: While the Delhi High Court noted that the right to identity is an “intrinsic part” of the right to life under Article 21, the Allahabad High Court said that the fundamental right to keep or change one’s name is vested in every citizen under Articles 19(1)(a), 21, and 14 of the Constitution.

The right to change one’s name or surname is a part of the right to life under Article 21, the High Courts of Allahabad and Delhi recently said.



Allowing a man called Shahnawaz to change his name to Md. Sameer Rao, the Allahabad HC on May 25 said the fundamental right to keep or change one’s name is vested in every citizen under Articles 19(1)(a), 21, and 14 of the Constitution.

The Delhi HC on May 19 allowed a plea filed by two brothers to reflect their father’s changed surname — from “Mochi” to “Nayak” — on their Class 10 and 12 Board certificates, stating that the right to identity is an “intrinsic part” of the right to life under Article 21.

WHY DID THE PETITIONERS WANT TO CHANGE THEIR NAMES?

In ‘Sadanand & Anr. vs CBSE & Ors’, a plea was filed by two brothers before the Delhi HC seeking to set aside a letter issued by the CBSE on June 1, 2017, refusing to change their father’s last name from ‘Mochi’ to ‘Nayak’ in their 10th and 12th Board certificates.

Owing to caste atrocities suffered by him, the father had earlier changed his surname and published it in the newspaper and the Gazette of

India as required. His surname was changed across various public documents, such as Aadhaar, PAN, and Voter ID. However, CBSE refused to update the brothers' certificates with the father's new surname.

In 'Md. Sameer Rao vs. State of U.P.' the Allahabad HC dealt with a petition filed against an order dated December 12, 2020, passed by the Regional Secretary, Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Regional Office, Rai Bareilly, rejecting Shahnawaz's application to change his name to "Md. Sameer Rao" in his High School and Intermediate certificates, seemingly "for a higher sense of self-worth".

Although the petitioner published his changed name in a popular daily and the Gazette, the Board refused to update the same on his school certificates.

WHY WERE THEIR NAME-CHANGE REQUESTS DENIED BY THE AUTHORITIES?

In 'Sadanand & Anr. vs CBSE & Ors', the CBSE contended that a change in the surname of the petitioners would subsequently entail a change in their caste, which could be misused. It also said that seeking a change in the father's name beyond the school records is not permissible.

In 'Md. Sameer Rao vs. State of U.P.' the state argued that a change in the name is not an absolute right and is subject to restrictions imposed by law. It was also argued that the Board rightly rejected the name change as it was barred by limitation.

WHAT DID THE ALLAHABAD HC HOLD?

Observing that the authorities had arbitrarily rejected the application for a change of name, the Allahabad HC in its May 25 ruling said that the action of the authorities violated the fundamental rights of the petitioner guaranteed under Article 19(1) (a), Article 21, and Article 14 of the Constitution.

Name changes made in the High School or Intermediate education certificates issued by the

educational boards have to be simultaneously incorporated in all documents of identity issued by various authorities like Aadhaar, PAN, ration card, etc., the court said, reasoning that congruence in all identity-related documents is essential.

Allowing one to carry identification documents with separate names "would lead to confusion in identity and possibility of mischief," the court said, adding that the state should prevent such misuse.

WHAT DID THE DELHI HC HOLD?

The Delhi HC in its May 19 ruling noted that the father had decided to change his surname "in order to overcome the social stigma and the disadvantage faced" by his sons and that CBSE's denial to carry out the requisite change in the certificates was "totally unjustified".

Observing that the petitioners belonged to a Scheduled Caste, the court said that 'Mochi' is a "caste name within the larger cobbler community dealing with leather", particularly footwear, and owing to the work carried out by their father's family, "Mochi" had become their surname.

Additionally, the court noted that the petitioners "have every right to have an identity which gives them an honourable and respectable identity in the society." If they suffered any disadvantage on account of their surname or faced social prejudices due to it, "they are certainly entitled to a change of their identity that gives respectability to the petitioners in the societal structure," the court reasoned.

WHAT DID THE COURTS SAY ABOUT ARTICLE 21?

In both the Delhi and Allahabad High Court cases, a common thread of Article 21 was found running. As it allowed Shahnawaz to become "Md. Sameer Rao", the Allahabad HC observed that the "right to keep a name of choice or change the name according to personal preference comes within the mighty sweep of the right to life guaranteed under Article 21."

The court relied on the **Kerala HC ruling in “Kashish Gupta vs. Central Board of Secondary Education” (2020)**, stating, “To have a name and to express the same in the manner he wishes, is certainly a part of the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1)(a) as well as a part of the right to liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. State or its instrumentalities cannot stand in the way of the use of any name preferred by an individual or for any change of name into one of his choices except to the extent prescribed under Article 19(2) or by a law which is just, fair and reasonable.”

Along similar lines, the Allahabad HC relied on the 2020 and 2021 rulings delivered by the Delhi HC and Supreme **Court in “Rayaan Chawla vs. University of Delhi” and “Jigyada Yadav vs. CBSE”** to argue against adopting a technical approach to changing names and to say that “name is an intrinsic element of identity,” respectively.

In Rayaan Chawla, the court included the right to change names under the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) along with Article 21 of the Constitution. In Jigyada Yadav, the top court ruled that “an individual must be in complete control of her name and law must enable her to retain” and exercise such control freely “for all times”.

Referring to the UN Human Rights Committee’s view in “Coeriel and Aurik v. The Netherlands”, the Allahabad HC also said that a name is an indispensable component of a person’s identity and falls within the realm of the right to privacy.

In the same vein, the Delhi High Court allowed “Lakshman Mochi” to change his last name to “Lakshman Nayak” while holding the “Right to Identity” to be an “intrinsic part of the Right to Life under Article 21”.

The court also said that “There is no denying the fact that the Right to Life includes within its ambit,

the Right to Live with Dignity,” which includes “not to be tied down by any casteism” faced by a person due to the caste to which he or she belongs.

Thus, the Delhi HC ruled that “if a person wants to change his or her surname”, to not be “identified with any particular caste” that “may be a cause of prejudice” to them “in any manner”, the same is permissible.

WHAT ARE SOME RESTRICTIONS ON THE RIGHT TO CHANGE NAMES?

Although the right to change or keep one’s name is a fundamental right “by virtue of Article 19(1) (a) and Article 21”, it is not an absolute right and is subject to various reasonable restrictions, as the Allahabad High Court clarified in Sameed Rao’s case.

However, the restrictions imposed by law on fundamental rights have to be fair, just, and reasonable, the court said, citing the 2017 SC ruling in “K. S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India,” saying, “The inter-relationship between the guarantee against arbitrariness and the protection of life and personal liberty operates in a multi-faceted plane.”

The procedure for the deprivation of such rights must be “fair, just, and reasonable”, the court said.

The court also highlighted the principle of proportionality as an “essential facet of the guarantee against arbitrary state action,” since it ensures that the nature and quality of the right’s encroachment are not disproportionate to the law’s purpose.

The value of human dignity has an important role in determining the proportionality of a statute limiting a constitutional right, the court said, citing the test of reasonableness in the 2016 SC ruling in “Jeeja Ghosh vs. Union of India.”

ENRICH YOUR ANSWER

INDIA TO BE ‘VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH’: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

‘Global North’ refers loosely to countries like the US, Canada, Russia, and Australia, while ‘Global South’ includes countries in Asia, Africa and South America. Let us try to understand what these terms mean, and the shifts in global politics indicated by their usage.

As India assumed the presidency of the G20 group of countries for 2022 to 2023, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on December 1 that the country would be the “voice of the Global South, that is otherwise under-represented in such forums”.

The term has since been used multiple times, such as when Jaishankar said of ongoing global conflicts, “polarisation may occur elsewhere, the people who suffer most are the Global South”.

THE NEED FOR THE ‘GLOBAL NORTH’ AND THE ‘GLOBAL SOUTH’

For a long time in the study of international political systems, the method of categorising countries into broad categories for easier analysis has existed. The concepts of ‘East’ and ‘West’ is one example of this, with the Western countries generally signifying greater levels of economic development and prosperity among their people, and Eastern countries considered as being in the process of that transition.

Another similar categorisation is of **First World, Second World and Third World countries**, referring to countries associated with the **Cold war-era alliances of the US, the USSR, and non-aligned countries**, respectively.

At the centre of these concepts is the **World Systems approach** introduced by sociologist **Immanuel Wallerstein** in 1974, emphasising an interconnected perspective of looking at world politics.

He said there are three major zones of production: **core, peripheral and semi-peripheral**. The core zones reap profits, being the owners of cutting-edge technologies – countries like the US or Japan. Peripheral zones, on the other hand, engage in less sophisticated production that is more labour-intensive. In the middle are countries like India and Brazil.

SO WHAT WAS THE NEED FOR NEW TERMS?

In the post-Cold War world, the First World/Third World classification was no longer feasible, because when the Communist USSR disintegrated in 1991, most countries had no choice but to ally at some level with the capitalist US – the only remaining global superpower.

Other classifiers have also seen criticism. The East/West binary was seen as often perpetuating stereotypical thinking about African and Asian countries. Categorising incredibly diverse countries into a monolith was felt to be too simplistic.

Also, the idea that some countries were ‘developed’ while others were not was thought to be too wide a classification, inadequate for accurately discussing concerns.

Writing in 2014 from the perspective of his organisation’s philanthropic activities, Bill Gates said of the ‘developing’ tag, “Any category that

lumps China and the Democratic Republic of Congo together confuses more than it clarifies. Some so-called developing countries have come so far that it's fair to say they have developed. A handful of failed states are hardly developing at all. Most countries are somewhere in the middle."

WHERE DOES THE GLOBAL SOUTH COME IN ?

What sets the terms Global North and South apart are that first, they are arguably more accurate in grouping like countries together, measuring similarly in terms of wealth, indicators of education and healthcare, etc. Another commonality between the South countries is that most have a history of colonisation, largely at the hands of European powers.

Secondly, this classification trains more focus on the Global South. When leaders such as Jaishankar mention it, they are also pointing to the region's historical exclusion from prominent international organisations – such as from the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. As bodies like the UN and the IMF are involved in major decision-making that affect the world in terms of politics, economy and society, the exclusion is seen by these countries as contributing to their slower growth.

As a result, the idea that the South can together advocate for common causes has come up, as underlined by the External Affairs Minister.

Interestingly, when Jaishankar criticised the expectation from India to take a stance on the Ukraine war and rebuke Russia in June this year, China's state-owned newspaper Global Times praised the comments. This is where the idea of 'South-South' cooperation comes in.

Why the concept is being reiterated now is partly because of the economic emergence of some of these South countries, such as India and China, in

the last few decades. Many consider the world to now be multipolar rather than one where the US alone dominates international affairs. The progress achieved by many Asian countries is also seen as challenging the idea that the North is the ideal.

As **Samuel P Huntington** wrote in his 1996 book **'The Class of Civilizations and the Remaking of Global Order'**, "East Asians attribute their dramatic economic development not to their import of Western culture but rather to their adherence to their own culture."

CRITICISM OF THE CLASSIFICATION

Some of the earlier terms' criticisms apply here, too, such as the argument that the term is too broad. In the ongoing debate about North countries paying for funding green energy, having historically contributed to higher carbon emissions, many in the Global North have objected to China and India's exclusion from this, given their increasing industrialisation.

There is also the question of whether the South simply aims to replace the North and the positions it occupies, again continuing a cycle in which a few countries accumulate crucial resources. As Kevin Gray, a professor of International Relations at the University of Sussex writes, "Much controversy currently surrounds the question of whether elites of the global South and 'rising powers' genuinely have the intention to challenge the dominant structures of global capitalist development".

In the rise of Asia, the continued neglect of Africa has been questioned as well. China is increasingly making inroads here through the Belt and Road Initiative for developing infrastructure. But whether that results in a win-win situation for both parties or focuses on profit for only China remains to be seen.

'INDIA HAD PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS WHEN PEOPLE OF EUROPE WERE MERE NOMADS': DR BR AMBEDKAR: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Ambedkar was making a larger point about how Indian history had references to democratic traditions as they are now understood, and are at times claimed to be Western inventions.



India's new Parliament building was inaugurated on the morning of May 28 (Sunday), as part of the larger Central Vista project for the redevelopment of key government buildings in central Delhi that were constructed nearly a century ago.

Back then, under colonial rule, buildings like the Parliament were constructed to plan a city suited to the ruling class. It followed the coronation of George V as Emperor of India on December 12, 1911, when the monarch announced, "We have decided upon the transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient Capital of Delhi."

The parliament building's construction took six years – from 1921 to 1927. It was originally called the Council House and housed the Imperial Legislative Council, the legislature of British India.

After independence, the Constituent Assembly that was to draft the Indian Constitution took over the building and in 1950 it became the location of the Indian Parliament as the Constitution came into force. In this context, we look to a quote by the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr BR Ambedkar, on how aspects of democracy were not imports of British rule, but located in Indian history itself.

WHAT THE FULL QUOTE WAS

Delivering a speech at the Law College of the University of Delhi, on April 10, 1948, Ambedkar said:

"There could be no doubt that one of the countries which could boast of a great ancient civilization was India. When inhabitants of Europe were living under almost barbaric and nomadic conditions

this country had reached the highest peak of civilization. It had parliamentary institutions when people of Europe were mere nomads.”

WHAT THE QUOTE MEANS

In the speech, Ambedkar was making a larger point about how Indian history had references to democratic traditions as they are now understood, and that were often claimed by Western countries as being their inventions.

He added, “It looked to the laymen as if our parliamentary institutions today had borrowed all parliamentary procedure from European Countries, particularly from Britain, but I think anyone who refers for instance, to the pages of the Vinay-pitaka will find that there is no ground for such a view.” Vinay-pitaka is a scripture of Theravada Buddhism that listed the behaviours and rules mandated for Buddhist monks.

Ambedkar said that Vinay-pitaka regulated meetings of the Bhikkhus Sangh (the monks) and there was the well-known rule that no debate could take place except on ‘Neti’ motion. He drew a parallel to the parliament procedure that said there could be no debate held unless there was a motion and no vote could be taken unless a motion was put.

That the Vinay-pitaka contained a definite provision for voting, where Salpatraka (the bark of tree) was used as ballot paper, was another proof he gave of existing democratic procedures in India. There was also a system of ‘secret ballot’, where the Bhikkhu himself could drop his ‘Salpatraka’ in the ballot box, he said.

While Ambedkar did not mention a particular time period in his speech, it could be around 1 century BCE, which as per one estimate is when the Theravada canons were written. It was only after around 483 BCE, when Buddha passed, that Buddhism split into sub-groups like Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism over the teachings that were to be now followed. The

former is considered more rigid and following a certain set of fixed rules, while the latter is more all-encompassing in its rituals.

At this time in Europe, there was fighting among tribes, but it is not entirely correct to say that by being nomads, no systems of governance existed in all of the continent. The concept of direct democracy and voting (although severely limited to landowning men) is of around this period in places like Greece, though believed to be slightly after Buddha’s time. At the same time, the Indian and Chinese civilisations boasted more developed societies compared to Britain.

CAUTION AGAINST AUTOCRACY

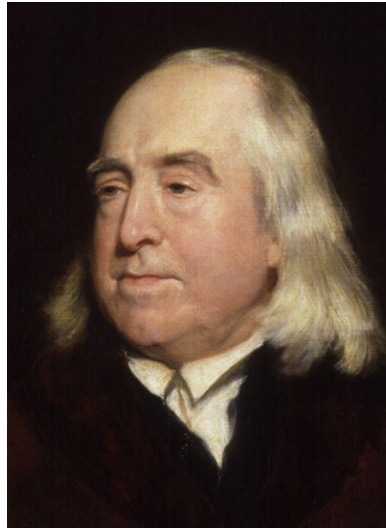
But this did not mean that Ambedkar looked at a glorious past with rose-tinted glasses. He noted that there was a contribution made by Western democracies that was important to note. He said, “The difference between ancient society and modern society lies in the fact that in ancient societies law-making was not the function of the people. Law was made by God or by the law-giver.”

This refers to how Europe, which saw the birth of modern-day democracies, moved away from the supremacy of the monarch and the dominance that religious organisations enjoyed in society by mandating the separation of Church and State. Ambedkar said, “After a course of time, jurisdiction of ecclesiastical law was challenged by secular law with the result that today’s law in the West was purely secular and the jurisdiction of the Church was confined merely to the priest.”

He then warns against an inability to introspect in society that he believes was lacking earlier. “Unfortunately, ancient societies never dared to assume the function of repairing their own defects; consequently they decayed. One of the reasons for the decay of Hindu society is that it was governed by law which had either been made by Manu or Yajnavalkya. Law that has been laid down by these law-makers is divine law. The result was that Hindu society was never able to repair itself.”

SCHOLARS DIGEST:KNOW YOUR SCHOLARS

JEREMY BENTHAM: A PIONEER OF UTILITARIANISM AND LEGAL REFORM



INTRODUCTION

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was a British philosopher, legal theorist, and social reformer whose ideas had a profound impact on the fields of ethics, jurisprudence, and political philosophy. Bentham is primarily known for his development of utilitarianism, a moral theory that emphasizes the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.

UTILITARIANISM: THE GREATEST HAPPINESS PRINCIPLE

At the core of Bentham's philosophy lies the principle of utilitarianism, which he famously summarized as the "greatest happiness principle." According to Bentham, the moral worth of an action should be judged by its ability to produce the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of individuals. Bentham viewed happiness as the ultimate end, and he believed that rational calculation and empirical analysis could guide ethical decision-making.

Bentham's utilitarianism aimed to create a more just and equitable society by maximizing overall welfare. He advocated for policies that would promote social harmony, economic prosperity, and individual freedom, as long as they contributed to the general well-being of society. Bentham's utilitarian framework challenged traditional moral theories based on religious doctrines and subjective notions of right and wrong.

THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY IN LAW AND LEGISLATION

Bentham's utilitarian principles extended beyond ethics and had significant implications for legal theory and practice. He argued that laws should be evaluated based on their utility or usefulness to society. Bentham advocated for a systematic and rational approach to lawmaking that prioritized the common good over arbitrary rules and outdated traditions.

Bentham's utilitarian legal philosophy emphasized the importance of transparency, predictability, and proportionality in legislation. He believed that laws should be clear and accessible to all citizens, promoting fairness and equality before the law. Furthermore, Bentham proposed the concept of judicial discretion, allowing judges to interpret and apply the law in a manner that maximizes utility in specific circumstances.

PANOPTICON: A MODEL OF SURVEILLANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

One of Bentham's most controversial ideas was the Panopticon, a prison design that embodied his vision of efficient surveillance and social control. The Panopticon was a circular structure with a central observation tower, from which prison guards could monitor all inmates without being seen themselves. The design aimed to create a constant state of uncertainty among prisoners, leading to self-regulation and discipline.

While the Panopticon was not widely implemented as Bentham envisioned, his concept of pervasive surveillance continues to resonate in the modern world. Today, with the rise of digital technology and government surveillance programs, Bentham's ideas about the potential for surveillance to influence behaviour and maintain social order remain subjects of debate and concern.

LEGACY AND INFLUENCE

Jeremy Bentham's ideas had a lasting impact on various disciplines, shaping debates in ethics, law, and political philosophy. His utilitarian principles continue to inform discussions on the balance between individual rights and the collective good, and his emphasis on rational analysis and empirical evidence in decision-making has influenced fields such as economics and public policy.

Bentham's advocacy for legal reform and his critique of arbitrary and unjust laws laid the groundwork for modern legal systems based on principles of fairness, equality, and utility. His ideas also inspired subsequent thinkers, including John Stuart Mill, who expanded and refined utilitarianism in the 19th century.

CONCLUSION

Jeremy Bentham's contributions to political philosophy and ethics, particularly through his development of utilitarianism and his insights into legal reform, have had a lasting impact on contemporary thought. While some aspects of his ideas remain contentious and subject to criticism, his emphasis on promoting overall happiness, rationality, and the pursuit of societal well-being continues to shape the discourse.

SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON



INTRODUCTION

Samuel P. Huntington, in full **Samuel Phillips Huntington**, (born April 18, 1927, New York, N.Y., U.S.—died Dec. 24, 2008, Martha's Vineyard, Mass.), American political scientist, consultant to various U.S. government agencies, and important political commentator in national debates on U.S. foreign policy in the late 20th and early 21st century.

EDUCATION

Huntington earned a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1946 and then served in the U.S. Army. Afterward he attended the University of Chicago, where he received a master's degree in 1948, and Harvard University, where he earned a doctorate in 1951 and joined the faculty.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

In 1959 Huntington became associate director of the Institute for War and Peace Studies at Columbia University, but he returned to Harvard in 1962. At Harvard he served as chairman of the Department of Government (1967–69; 1970–71) and was director of the Center for International Affairs (1978–89) and of the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies beginning in 1989. From 1996 to 2004 he served as chair of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies.

MAJOR WORKS

Although Huntington began his career as a specialist in American politics, his research and analysis branched into comparative politics, foreign policy, international relations, and modernization. His first major work, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957), examined the relationship between military professionalism and political power and the contradiction between American liberalism and military conservatism and helped to set the terms of debate about the proper form of civil-military relations. Perhaps his most important work is *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968), in which he argued that in developing countries political decay and instability were at least as likely as the development of liberal democracy and that the “most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government.”

Huntington founded the journal *Foreign Policy* in 1970 and later served as president of the American Political Science Association (1986–87). He was an adviser to Vice President Hubert Humphrey during Humphrey's unsuccessful 1968 presidential campaign, chairman of the Democratic Party's Foreign Policy Advisory Committee in the mid-1970s, and coordinator of security planning in the National Security Council (1977–79) during the administration of President Jimmy Carter.

Emphasizing the rise of East Asia and Islam, he argued in the controversial *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) that conflict between several large world civilizations was replacing conflict between states or ideologies as the dominant cleavage in international relations. Although he cautioned against intervention in non-Western cultures in *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington was generally identified with hawkish opinions on foreign policy and had been a target of leftist student protesters during the Vietnam War. He published major works on various subjects, including national security strategy, defense policy making, American political ideology, transnational organizations, conservatism, the governability of democracies, processes of democratization, and the comparison of U.S. and Soviet governments. His books include *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics* (1961); *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (1981), which assessed periodic attempts to make American

political institutions and behaviour conform to the traditional national creed of liberty, equality, and hostility to authority; *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1991), which explained the process of widespread democratization of countries in the 1970s and '80s and compared it with previous historical periods; and *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity* (2004), which examined sources of U.S. political culture and emerging threats to unified national identity.

RELEVANCE TODAY

Huntington's thesis on Clash of Civilizations can be applied to the ongoing tensions between USA and China, which some of the scholars have already termed as the emergence of a new cold war. Further the democracy backsliding that we are observing the world over from Africa to Asia to Latin America can be linked to waves of democracy theorized by S.P Huntington.

JACQUES DERRIDA: DECONSTRUCTION AND THE CRITIQUE OF BINARY THINKING



INTRODUCTION

Jacques Derrida, a prominent figure in 20th-century philosophy, revolutionised the field with his **concept of deconstruction**. Through his critical approach to language, meaning, and

interpretation, Derrida challenged traditional notions of truth, presence, and fixed meanings. This article explores Derrida's main ideas, including **deconstruction, différance, and the critique of binary oppositions**, and their lasting impact on philosophy, literary theory, and cultural studies.

DECONSTRUCTION AND THE UNRAVELLING OF BINARY THINKING

At the heart of Derrida's philosophy is the **concept of deconstruction**, which seeks to expose and disrupt the underlying assumptions and **hierarchical structures** within texts and discourses. Deconstruction challenges the notion of fixed meanings and binary oppositions by revealing the inherent instability and fluidity of language. Derrida argues that language is inherently fragmented, and meaning is constructed through a web of interconnected signs, rather than fixed definitions.

DIFFÉRANCE AND THE PLAY OF SIGNIFIERS

A key concept in Derrida's work is **différance**, a term he coined to emphasize the dual nature of language. Différance denotes the simultaneous deferral and difference inherent in signification. According to Derrida, **meaning is deferred in language**, as signs continually refer to other signs, creating an infinite chain of signifiers. This deferral undermines the notion of fixed meanings and invites a constant play of interpretation and reinterpretation.

CRITIQUE OF BINARY OPPOSITIONS AND LOGOCENTRISM

Derrida critiques the traditional Western philosophical tradition, which relies heavily on binary oppositions such as good/evil, presence/absence, and male/female. He argues that these dichotomies are not fixed and stable, but rather constructed through hierarchical and exclusionary processes. Derrida exposes the inherent biases and power dynamics embedded within binary thinking, challenging the privileging of one term over the other.

DECONSTRUCTION AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Derrida's deconstructive approach extends beyond philosophy and infiltrates literary theory and cultural studies. Deconstruction offers a method for analyzing texts by uncovering the multiple meanings, contradictions, and tensions within them. It highlights the interplay between the explicit and implicit, the intended and unintended, and the conscious and unconscious aspects of a text, revealing the complexity and indeterminacy of meaning.

LEGACY AND CRITICISMS

Derrida's ideas have had a profound impact on various fields, including philosophy, literary theory, and cultural studies. His emphasis on the decentering of meaning, the critique of binary oppositions, and the play of signifiers has opened up new avenues of inquiry and challenged established paradigms. However, Derrida's work has **faced criticism for its perceived obscurity and its potential to undermine foundational concepts of truth and knowledge**. Critics argue that deconstruction's emphasis on the indeterminacy of meaning can lead to a nihilistic stance and a rejection of objective understanding.

CONCLUSION

Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction has reshaped our understanding of language, interpretation, and meaning. Through his critique of binary thinking and the play of signifiers, Derrida invites us to question fixed meanings and embrace the inherent complexity and ambiguity of texts. His legacy continues to inspire critical thinking and challenge established paradigms in philosophy and cultural studies.

BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR



INTRODUCTION

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, (born April 14, 1891, Mhow, India—died December 6, 1956, New Delhi), leader of the Dalits (Scheduled Castes; formerly called untouchables) and law minister of the government of India (1947–51).

EARLY LIFE

Born of a Dalit Mahar family of western India, he was as a boy humiliated by his high-caste schoolfellows. His father was an officer in the Indian army.

EDUCATION

Awarded a scholarship by the Gaekwar (ruler) of Baroda (now Vadodara), he studied at universities in the United States, Britain, and Germany.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER & MAJOR WORKS

He entered the Baroda Public Service at the Gaekwar's request, but, again ill-treated by his high-caste colleagues, he turned to legal practice and to teaching. He soon established his leadership among Dalits, founded several journals

on their behalf, and succeeded in obtaining special representation for them in the legislative councils of the government. Contesting Mahatma Gandhi's claim to speak for Dalits (or Harijans, as Gandhi called them), he wrote *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* (1945).

In 1947 Ambedkar became the law minister of the government of India. He took a leading part in the framing of the Indian constitution, outlawing discrimination against untouchables, and skillfully helped to steer it through the assembly; the adoption of the constitution on January 26, 1950, is today celebrated as Republic Day, a national holiday. He resigned in 1951, disappointed at his lack of influence in the government. In October 1956, in despair because of the perpetuation of untouchability in Hindu doctrine, he renounced Hinduism and became a Buddhist, together with about 200,000 fellow Dalits, at a ceremony in Nagpur. Ambedkar's book *The Buddha and His Dhamma* appeared posthumously in 1957, and it was republished as *The Buddha and His Dhamma: A Critical Edition* in 2011, edited, introduced, and annotated by Aakash Singh Rathore and Ajay Verma.

RELEVANCE TODAY

Ambedkar is regarded as one of the greatest proponent of social equality and constitutionalism. At a time when India is facing a challenge of ever increasing majoritarianism, there is a need to reestablish the centrality of ideas of constitutional morality, rule of law, fraternity and social equality given by Ambedkar. Also one of the biggest contribution of Ambedkar has been to give the

voice to voiceless and power to powerless sections in Indian society, specially the Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes. At present the Scheduled Cates are passing through a phase of despondency and they lacks their own independent voice from within the community to usher their voice and demands. Today Scheduled Castes needs a leader like Ambedkar who can again usher their demands and aspirations in a more constructive and articulate manner.

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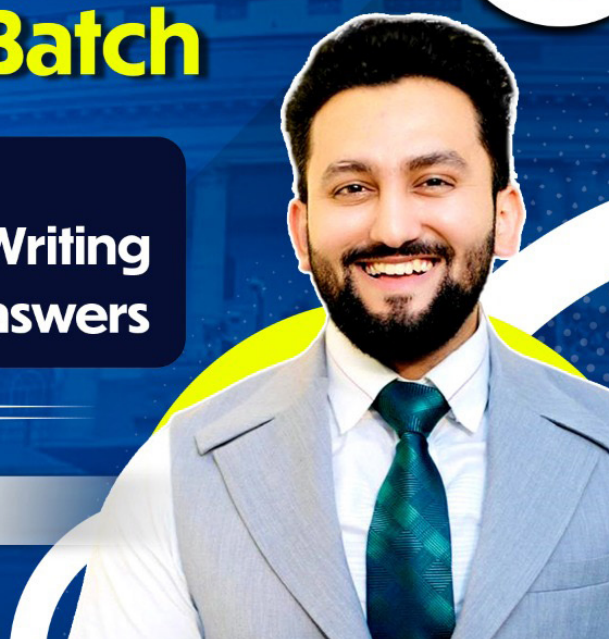
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PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which Schedule of the Constitution of India contains : Special provisions for the administration and control of Scheduled Areas in several States?
 - (a) Third
 - (b) Fifth
 - (c) Seventh
 - (d) Ninth
2. Under which one of the following Constitution Amendment Acts, four languages were added to the list of languages under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, thereby raising their number to 22?
 - (a) Constitution (Ninetieth Amendment) Act
 - (b) Constitution (Ninety-first Amendment) Act
 - (c) Constitution (Ninety-second Amendment) Act
 - (d) Constitution (Ninety-third Amendment) Act
3. Which one of the following Constitutional Amendments states that the total number of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, in the Council of Minister shall not exceed fifteen percent of the total number of members of the House of the People?
 - (a) 90th
 - (b) 91st
 - (c) 92nd
 - (d) 93rd
4. With reference to the Constitution of India, consider the following :
 1. Fundamental Rights
 2. Fundamental Duties
 3. Directive Principles of the State Policy

Which of the above provisions of the Constitution of India is/are fulfilled by the National Social Assistance Programme launched by the government of India?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
5. In the Indian parliamentary system, what is the relationship between the executive and the legislature?
 - (a) The executive is a separate entity from the legislature and has no direct relationship.
 - (b) The executive and the legislature are completely independent of each other.
 - (c) The executive is responsible to the legislature and derives its authority from it.
 - (d) The legislature is subordinate to the executive and must follow its directives.
6. Which of the following is a mechanism in parliamentary democracies to prevent executive dominance or abuse?
 - (a) Bicameralism with an Upper House representing minority interests.
 - (b) Granting complete control over parliamentary proceedings to the executive.
 - (c) Allowing the executive to make unilateral decisions without legislative approval.
 - (d) Restricting the rights of the opposition in Parliament.
7. What is the role of the Speaker in a parliamentary democracy?
 - (a) The Speaker is a neutral and independent authority representing the interests of Parliament against the executive.
 - (b) The Speaker is a member of the ruling party and acts in favour of the executive.
 - (c) The Speaker is responsible for making unilateral decisions without consulting the legislature.
 - (d) The Speaker has no real influence over the functioning of the legislature.
8. How has the anti-defection law impacted intra-party dissent in the Indian Parliament?
 - (a) It has encouraged open debates and discussions among party members.

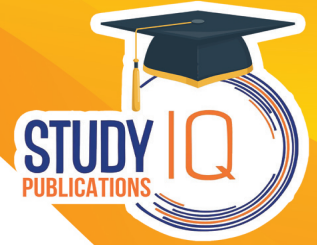
- (b) It has strengthened the hand of the party leadership and made dissent more difficult.
 (c) It has eliminated all forms of dissent within political parties.
 (d) It has given more power to the opposition to challenge the executive.
9. Which one among the following commission was set up in pursuance of a definite provision under an Article of the Constitution of India?
 (a) University Grants Commission (b) National Human Rights Commission
 (c) Election Commission (d) Central Vigilance Commission
10. Consider the following statements:
 1. Free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years age-group by the State by the seventy-sixth Amendment to the Constitution of India.
 2. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan seeks to provide computer education even in rural areas.
 3. Education was included in the Concurrent List by the Forty-second Amendment, 1976 to the Constitution of India'.
 Which of the statements given above are correct?
 (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1 and 2
 (c) 2 and 3 (d) 1 and 3
11. Which of the following Constitution Amendment Acts seeks that the size of the Councils of Ministers at the Centre and in a State must not exceed 15 per cent of the total number of members in the Lok Sabha and the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly of that State, respectively?
 (a) 91st (b) 93rd
 (c) 95th (d) 97th
12. Which of the following is/are included in the Directive Principles of the State Policy?
 1. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour
 2. Prohibition of consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of other drugs which are injurious to health
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
Code:
 (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. Who has the power to appoint judges to the higher judiciary in India?
 (a) President of India (b) Prime Minister of India
 (c) Chief Justice of India (d) Law Minister of India
14. The doctrine of precedent refers to:
 (a) The power of the judiciary to interpret laws
 (b) The principle of following previous court decisions
 (c) The process of selecting judges for the higher judiciary
 (d) The separation of powers among different branches of government
15. Which term is used to describe an approach where the judiciary takes an active role in shaping public policy and correcting social injustices?
 (a) Judicial activism (b) Judicial restraint
 (c) Judicial review (d) Judicial independence

ANSWERS

1. (b) Fifth schedule relates to the control and administration of scheduled areas in states other than Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The Sixth Schedule deals with administration and control of tribal areas in the state of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
2. (c) 92nd Amendment Act 2003 added Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri languages in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. Originally there were 14 languages in the 8th schedule. The 21st amendment act added Sindhi language. The 71st amendment act added Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali languages.
3. (b) The above provision has been added by 91st Constitutional Amendment Act 2003.
4. (b) The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which came into effect from 15th August, 1995 represents a significant step towards the fulfillment of the Directive Principles in Article 41 (Right to Work, to Education and to Public Assistance in certain cases) of the Constitution.
5. (c) The executive is responsible to the legislature and derives its authority from it.
6. (a) Bicameralism with an Upper House representing minority interests.
7. (a) The Speaker is a neutral and independent authority representing the interests of Parliament against the executive.
8. (b) It has strengthened the hand of the party leadership and made dissent more difficult.
9. (c) Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission under Article 324.
10. (c) Statement 1 is incorrect as this provision was added by 86th Amendment Act (not 76th).
11. (a) The above provision has been added by 91st constitutional Amendment Act, 2003.
12. (b) Statement 1 is incorrect as it is a Fundamental Right under article 23 of Part III of the constitution. Statement 2 corresponds to Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 47 under Part IV of the Constitution.
13. (c) Chief Justice of India
14. (b) The principle of following previous court decisions
15. (a) Judicial activism

UPSC IAS (Mains)

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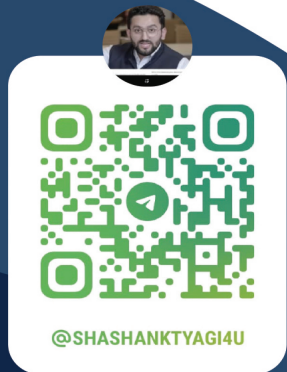
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